Chronicles

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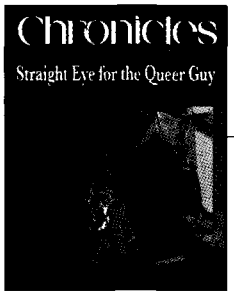

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EDITOR
Thomas Fleming

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Scott P. Richert

SENIOR EDITOR, BOOKS
Chilton Williamson, Jr.

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Aaron D. Wolf

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Matthew Rarey

ART DIRECTOR
H. Ward Sterett

DESIGNER
Melanie Anderson

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Katherine Dalton, George Garrett, Paul Gottfried, James O. Tate, Clyde Wilson

CORRESPONDING EDITORS
Wayne Allensworth, Janet Scott Barlow, Bill Kauffman, Donald Livingston, Roger D. McGrath, William Mills, William Murchison, Andrei Navrozov

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Samuel Francis

FILM EDITOR
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Srdja Trifkovic

LEGAL-AFFAIRS EDITOR
Stephen B. Presser

RELIGION EDITOR
Harold O.J. Brown

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Cindy Link

PUBLISHER
The Rockford Institute

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Spain

Joseph E. Fallon's article "The American Myth of World War I" (*Vital Signs*, January) contained a statement suggesting that the United States, in displacing Spain as an imperial power, had taken on some of Spain's characteristics.

In one respect, there is a striking similarity between Spain's century of imperialism (the 16th) and America's (the 20th). Each country suddenly found a source of wealth to finance her wars. In Spain's case, it was the gold of Mexico and Peru. The money did nothing for the economic development of Spain, and, when it was spent, Spain's days of glory ended.

In the case of the United States, it was the world's adoption of the dollar as the global currency, which began with the Bretton Woods conference in 1944, at which foreign governments agreed to accept dollars with the assurance that they could redeem them at any time for gold. This set the stage for the greatest governmental spending spree in history, one that continues to this day.

When President Nixon refused to allow foreign governments to exchange their dollars for gold in 1971, the party should have ended. Foreign central banks, however, continued to support our currency in order to protect their exports to the United States, thus feeding America's addiction to their underpriced products and supporting the U.S. government's deficit spending.

In the last few years, two trends have developed that are bringing this to an end. The establishment of the euro as the new central currency for Europe is not accompanied by a willingness of the European central bank to debase its own currency in order to support the dollar. To the contrary, that bank may wish to see the euro supplant the dollar as the world's reserve currency. At the same time, the sheer size of our trade deficit is forcing the dollar down against all other major currencies except that of China, which continues to support the dollar so that our industries may continue to be exported there. That support presumably will end when most of our capital has been exported. The result will be the opposite of what happened to Spain, which relapsed into her former poverty when the gold of the Americas was gone. The United States was the richest country in the world in 1944, but she is now the greatest debtor in history and is sliding into bankruptcy even as Wall Street heralds a new bull market.

There is another important difference between the two empires: Spain gave more to the Americas than she took. She ended the Aztec practice of human sacrifice and established a Christian civilization in the Americas. She did not exterminate the Indians as our forebears did.

America, on the other hand, has crowned her empire with an invasion of Iraq, a country that posed no threat to us or to her neighbors. The excuses for the invasion were lies, and the world knows it. And now we talk of bringing the Iraqis freedom and democracy—all at gunpoint, of course. We are sowing bitterness and hatred against us throughout the Middle East, even as the eclipse of our power approaches.

As for human sacrifice, we are not imitating the Spaniards here, either. Planned Parenthood and its abortion facilities are headed to Iraq, if they are not already there.

—Juan J. Ryan
New Providence, NJ

Mr. Fallon Replies:

Mr. Ryan offers an excellent overview of the evolution of the American economy since 1944, from world supremacy in the aftermath of World War II, to government "smoke and mirrors" over gold in the 1970's to preserve that position, to our impending bankruptcy. Validating Mr. Ryan's thesis is the warning issued by the IMF on January 4. As reported by Dow Jones, "the government faces a $45 trillion dollar shortfall in its ability to pay for [Social Security and Medicare] and all other long-term obligations. Closing that gap would require 'an immediate and permanent' federal tax increase of 60% or a 50% cut in Social Security and Medicare benefits."

I have to disagree with Mr. Ryan's other thesis, however. Contrary to his assertion, the Spanish did exterminate Indians and in greater numbers than the British or the Americans did. Between 1492 and 1776, the Indian population in Mexico

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was reduced from 11 million to 1.5 million, while the eight million Arawak and Carib Indians of the West Indies were completely annihilated.

Nor do I see any evidence that Spain established a "Christian civilization." With endemic violence and corruption and illegitimacy rates among the highest in the world, Latin America is many things—but it is not a Christian civilization.

On *Liberty*

In his piece on the tragedy of the U.S.S. *Liberty* (*Cultural Revolutions*, January), Matthew Rarey engaged in the type of blatant distortion and misrepresentation that is only too common in the mainstream media. I am sad to see it appear in *Chronicles*.

Mr. Rarey suggests the possibility that Israel intentionally attacked the *Liberty* during the Six Day War with the purpose of sinking the ship and blaming the attack on Egypt, in order to draw the United States into the war on Israel's side.

If Israel had intended to sink the *Liberty*, however, why did she break off the attack before the job was done? Mr. Rarey states that the ship's captain, William L. McGonagle, received the Congressional Medal of Honor for "heroically saving the ship from destruction." No doubt Captain McGonagle did behave heroically, as did his crew, but nothing he nor his crew did could have saved the *Liberty*, since the ship was essentially unarmed. The impression that Mr. Rarey leaves to those who are unfamiliar with the incident is that the Israelis were beaten off, when, in reality, they suddenly ended the attack with the *Liberty* perfectly helpless. The obvious explanation for this is that the Israelis stopped attacking when they finally recognized that the *Liberty* was an American ship. And what evidence justifies Mr. Rarey's assertion that the Israelis "evidently monitored the ship's communiqués with Washington"? In point of fact, Israel was not notified that the *Liberty* was to be in the war zone and had no way, other than visual identification, of determining the national origin of the vessel. Under the stress of actual combat, not war games, there is a natural tendency to shoot first and ask questions later. I am not saying this to exonerate the Israelis, but there is a world of difference between misfeasance and malfeasance, and not all the misfeasance in this tragic episode was on the Israeli side.

As far as the conspiracy theory goes, it is not plausible. Israel did not want or need American involvement in the actual fighting—not so long as the Soviets did not intervene on behalf of the Arabs. What Israel needed from the Americans, in addition to logistical support, was political support at the United Nations in order to stave off a resolution that would have forced a cease-fire before Israel could destroy the Arab armies that threatened her. The attack on the *Liberty* could have turned public opinion in the United States against Israel. This, for the Israelis, would have been a calamity of a magnitude comparable to direct Soviet intervention on the side of the Arabs.

What bothers me most, however, is the strong tendency among paleoconservatives to blame our troubles with Muslim extremists on a pro-Israel foreign policy. Mr. Rarey's piece is typical of this attitude. We are hated by Muslims not because of what we do but for who we are—or, at least, who they perceive us to be. President Clinton waged a war against Christian Serbia to benefit Kosovo's Muslims. The Muslim world sent us a nice thank-you card on September 11, 2001. And just how pro-Israel has U.S. foreign policy been? Since 1967, Israel has returned the vast majority of the land that she acquired in the Six Day War. Israel went along with this "land for peace" process under pressure from one American administration after another. The land is gone, but how much peace has Israel enjoyed? And after which of our wars did the United States pursue a land-for-peace policy?

Israel, with its socialist bent, is far from perfect. In the great war of civilizations between the once-Christian West and the still-Muslim East, however, the Israelis are on our side, and they can fight. These are not inconsequential considerations. We will not gain favor with the Arab world, our natural enemy, by stabbing in the back one of our few friends.

—John A. Collins
Pembroke Pines, FL

Mr. Rarey Replies:

I wrote about retired Navy legal counsel Capt. Ward Boston's affidavit, which accuses Israel of deliberately attacking the U.S.S. *Liberty* and Lyndon Johnson's team of cravenly covering it up, not as a prejudiced critic of Israel. Nor am I the flip-side of that warped record—the come-rain-or-shine apologist who refuses to acknowledge even the incontrovertible instances in which Israel has betrayed her best ally when it has served her interests. Rather, I reported on a controversy that has been allowed to simmer for over three decades because it has never been faithfully investigated. Why? Because evildoers prefer darkness or, in this case, classified documents and the sealed lips of serpentine souls—sealed during their time in office, at least.

For a disinterested account of the *Liberty* controversy, I recommend James Bamford's critically acclaimed history of the National Security Agency, *Body of Secrets*. Another good source for *Liberty*-related information is *logogo.net/liberty/htm*. Photos of the ship after the attack—which was launched following visual reconnaissance, lasted over two hours, wreaked a 70-percent all-American casualty rate, and destroyed the *Liberty*'s surveillance capabilities, thus making it unnecessary to sink her—speak more words than this response can accommodate.

On Serfdom

I just read Scott P. Richert's "Always Dead Downtowns. Always" (*The Rockford Files*, December 2003). This is the bicentennial year for Clearfield County, Pennsylvania. Our history is tied to natural resources: timber (pine spars for the tall ships); clay and coal (firebrick and coke for the burgeoning steel industry in Pittsburgh); and coal after World War II for electricity. Thanks, in large part, to foreign competition and environmentalism, our economy is bust.

Wal-Mart built a Supercenter as well as a distribution center in our area. Because of our dire employment situation, the company was hailed as an economic savior. Jobs were provided, but nothing to compete with coal-mining jobs in salary and benefits. However, since the Supercenter was built, all locally owned businesses in "competition" have folded—plus Kmart, Ames, and other non-locally owned businesses. In December, the last of the major grocery competitors (BiLo) announced its closing.

We are now economic serfs to our overlord in Arkansas.

—W.C. Kriner
Clearfield, PA

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by Doug Bandow

The Myth of WMD's

That the Bush administration went to war with Iraq based on a mistake—or, perhaps, a lie—has long been obvious. Former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill writes that, just ten days after Bush's inauguration, the National Security Council met to discuss how to dispatch Saddam Hussein. That was over seven months before September 11.

The seizure of Saddam Hussein has not made America safer. Just consider the elevated terrorism alert over the holidays; the parade of security forces on streets and rivers; the delayed and cancelled airline flights; the continued killings of American soldiers; the escalation of suicide bombings in occupied Iraq.

If Hussein threatened America's security, it was as a brutal dictator whose country was making weapons of mass destruction and trafficking with terrorists. The pitiful thug hiding in a small, underground chamber had no ability to threaten the United States. With only two bodyguards and no satellite phone, Hussein was not even the center of the resistance. His capture may have disheartened some opponents of the occupation, but evidence suggests that most insurgents are not fighting for him. Moreover, some Iraqis, freed from any fear of a Hussein restoration, are now pushing the United States more forcefully to hold elections and yield control.

Before the war, President Bush said that "the threat from Iraq stands alone," since that nation's "weapons of mass destruction are controlled by a murderous tyrant." He warned that Hussein had enough anthrax "to kill several million people" and sufficient botulinum toxin "to subject millions of people to death" and that he could produce ample quantities of sarin, mustard, and VX nerve agent to "kill untold thousands." Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz pointed to WMD's as the critical issue—in contrast to human rights or terrorism—around which the entire administration could rally.

Secretary of State Colin Powell was quite specific in his lengthy presentation to the U.N. Security Council. "Saddam Hussein could have produced 25,000 liters" of anthrax and had accounted for none of it.

> Saddam Hussein has never accounted for vast amounts of chemical weaponry: 550 artillery shells with mustard [gas], 30,000 empty munitions and enough precursors to increase his stockpile to as much as 500 tons of chemical agents.

Washington, added Secretary Powell, estimated that Iraq had stockpiled "between 100 and 500 tons of chemical weapons agent. That is enough agent to fill 16,000 battlefield rockets." He calmly asserted that "Saddam Hussein has chemical weapons" and asked: "When will we see the rest of the submerged iceberg?"

We have yet to see the *visible* part of the iceberg. Not one thimbleful of these materials has turned up. The same goes for the "large, unaccounted-for stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons—including VX, sarin, cyclosarin and mustard gas; anthrax, botulism, and possibly smallpox," of which Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld spoke. None of these biological and chemical weapons has been discovered. Reported David Kay, the head of America's Iraq Survey Group, which has been searching for WMD's:

> information found to date suggests that Iraq's large-scale capability to develop, produce, and fill new CW munitions was reduced—if not entirely destroyed—during Operations Desert Storm and Desert Fox, 13 years of U.N. sanctions, and U.N. inspections.

President Bush claimed that "we found biological laboratories." Where are they? "We have not yet been able to corroborate the existence of a mobile biological weapons production effort," admitted Kay. "Technical limitations would prevent any of these processes from being ideally suited to these trailers."

Of course, someone might eventually find something. With so much time elapsed, the seizure of Iraqi government files, the capture of hundreds of Baathist officials, and a professed willingness to pay big bucks for information, however, the cupboard has remained surprisingly bare.

Hussein does seem to have preserved some elements of a weapons program in the hopes of a future revival, but, said Kay, "It clearly does not look like a massive, resurgent program, based on what we discovered." Charles Duelfer, former deputy director of the U.N. inspections program, said: "It will probably turn out, in my judgment, that there are no existing weapons in Iraq, and that mildly surprises me."

President Bush has taken a different tack. Pressed by ABC's Diane Sawyer, he responded that there was a "possibility" Hussein could acquire them. "So what's the difference?" asked Bush. It is a big difference. Any number of governments on earth could do any number of bad things. That does not mean that we must bomb them today.

Nevertheless, the Bush administration has never retreated from its claim. In July, after the war had ended, Deputy Defense Secretary Wolfowitz testified that what the United States had done was to "remove a regime that was a threat to the United States." In a unipolar world dominated by the United States, which possesses the military capacity to destroy any antagonist, whom, exactly, did Saddam Hussein threaten?

Even if Iraq had WMD's—a reasonable assumption, actually—no one has ever explained why Saddam Hussein could not be deterred, like Joseph Stalin and Mao Tse-tung, the two greatest mass murderers in human history (based on simple numbers). In fact, Gen. Waffic al Samurai, head of Iraqi military intelligence during Gulf War I, reported that implicit U.S. nuclear threats deterred Hussein from using WMD's then: "[T]he warning was quite severe, and quite effective. The allied troops were certain to use nuclear arms and the price will be too dear and too high."

Even though the world may be a better place with Hussein in custody, facing trial, that does not retrospectively justify our conflict. In fact, we may have to wait years to discover all of the adverse consequences of loosing the Dogs of War in the Mideast.

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MEL GIBSON's *The Passion of the Christ* opens in theaters on Ash Wednesday (February 25). It is too early to tell whether Gibson has achieved his aim of creating an artistically compelling account of the last 12 hours of Christ's life that is also faithful to the Gospels, although those who have previewed the film are nearly universal in their praise. It is also too early to tell whether Gibson's film will find the audience he desires or will, instead, be savaged by a chorus of politically correct critics. Regardless of how well *The Passion* does at the box office or with critics, however, Gibson has already achieved a great deal, and his film deserves the support of all those who care about Western art and its chief inspiration, the Gospels.

Gibson's film has been controversial because it is rooted squarely in the Gospels. Unlike his critics, Gibson accepts the Gospels as they are and does not believe that they require any external justification, a view undoubtedly in accord with both traditional Christianity and the view of most Christians today. Gibson told Peter Boyer of the *New Yorker* that he experienced great despair in his 30's, "And I just hit my knees. And I had to use the Passion of Christ . . . to heal my wounds. And I've just been meditating on it for twelve years."

If any of Gibson's critics have ever meditated on Christ's Passion as anything other than a source of antisemitism, they have given no evidence of it in their criticism of Gibson. Indeed, Boston University academic Paula Fredriksen is an unbeliever who feels "anti-Semitism has been integral to Christianity." ADL National Director Abraham Foxman told the *New Yorker* that "the Gospels, if taken literally, can be very damaging," and he told *Jewish Week* that "The 'truth' [Gibson] is talking about has been used for 2000 years to buttress anti-Semitism and to give a rationale for persecuting Jews." The other academics who have been busy attacking Gibson, although Christians, are on record as blaming the New Testament for antisemitism, favoring the censoring of New Testament passages used in worship, and repudiating the belief that salvation is available only through Jesus Christ.

The scholars' allies in the media have been even more outspoken in their views. Canadian Donald Akinson attacked both Gibson's movie and another film, *The Gospel of John*, in the *Globe and Mail*, writing that "to film a literal version of the Gospel of John is like filming a faithful version of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion." Shmuley Boteach, writing in the *Jerusalem Post*, dismisses the passages in Matthew where the crowd accepts responsibility for Jesus' death as "cheap forgeries" and contends that there was a "deliberate effort on the part of New Testament editors to slander the Jews."

The scholars' attacks on Gibson have been driven, in part, by an academic arrogance bordering on gnosticism, a belief that no layman or churchman outside of their coterie could possibly understand the Gospels. Fredriksen dismissed Gibson in the *New Yorker* because "He doesn't even have a Ph.D on his staff." Sr. Mary Boys told the *Albany Times-Union* that Gibson "wouldn't know a scholar if he ran into one." Sister Boys has elsewhere opined that Scripture is like poetry—beyond the understanding of most people—and that "we are inviting people to a reading that seems to contradict the apparent meaning of the text . . . "

Mel Gibson is not the only object of the academics' scorn. John Pawlikowski confirmed for *Jewish Week* that Pope John Paul II had both watched Gibson's movie and praised its historical accuracy by stating "It is as it was." However, Pawlikowski also told *Jewish Week* that "I remain . . . very skeptical as to whether the ailing Pope was fully briefed about the concerns we and others have expressed." Pawlikowski noted that he and the other scholars "seriously question the way in which this papal screening was handled by some of [the Pope's] advisors." The scholars made similar comments when Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos, the prefect for the Congregation of the Clergy, praised Gibson's film and when Avery Cardinal Dulles disagreed with their desire to jettison core Christian teachings about salvation through Jesus Christ. Apparently, no one can understand anything about the Gospels unless they have been "fully briefed" about the scholars' own—admittedly counterintuitive—readings of Sacred Scripture.

To Gibson's credit, he has largely outmaneuvered his critics and provided an object lesson in how to win a battle in the Culture War, by staking out his position and refusing to back down. He has largely ignored the critics' calls for "sensitivity" and "dialogue," cultivating instead conservative Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox who share his belief in the Gospels, as well as conservative Jews who appreciate Gibson's sincerity and see in the Gospels something other than antisemitism. While the same small, unmerry band of academics and ecclesiastical apparatchiks continue to assail him, the increasing number of his supporters now includes many prominent evangelical Protestants, including Billy Graham, and, in addition to the Pope, such leading Catholics as Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos, Archbishop Chaput of Denver, and Fr. Augustine DiNoia, undersecretary to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and former theologian to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Needless to say, all of those praising Gibson's film affirm that it is not antisemitic. In addition, as Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos noted, "Mel Gibson not only closely follows the narrative of the Gospels, giving the viewer a new appreciation for these Biblical passages, but his artistic choices also make the film faithful to the meaning of the Gospels, as understood by the Church." By contrast, as Fr. DiNoia pointed out, "It is regrettable that people who had not seen the film, but only reviewed early versions of the script, gave rise to the charge that [the film] is anti-Semitic."

Gibson has actually accomplished something the critics claim to be interested in—advancing ecumenism. Sister Boys has claimed that *The Passion* is "dividing evangelicals and Catholics," when, in fact, it has done just the opposite, as evangelical Christians have warmly embraced a film directed by a Catholic, starring another devout Catholic, and placing a strong emphasis on Mary and the Eucharist.

In addition to demonstrating how the Culture War can be won, Gibson has also reminded us why it is worth fighting. Of necessity, much cultural commentary by conservatives and traditionalists has focused on what is wrong, as the popular culture over the last few decades has continued to expand the frontiers of degeneracy. In order to win the Culture War, however, we have to do more than point out the manifest defects in current mov-

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ies, music, and fiction. We also must support artists committed to producing art that builds on our Western heritage rather than trashing it. Gibson is attempting to do just that.

Gibson's aims, however, are even higher. He has spoken repeatedly of his religious motives in making this movie, and those who have seen it have described a film with the capacity to change hearts. Respected Vatican reporter John Allen, writing in the *National Catholic Reporter*, confirmed the Pope's praise for *The Passion*. In the same piece, Allen quoted a Vatican official who said "that while Gibson may be a bit idiosyncratic theologically, his 'heart is in the right place. There will be conversions because of this film.'" The straightforward faith expressed by Gibson and his allies is far more likely to attract new Christians than the belief, expressed by at least some of Gibson's critics, that the principal legacy of Christianity is hatred and the principal task of today's Christian is apology.

—*Tom Piatak*

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION's guest-worker amnesty proposal for "solving" the problem of illegal immigration is all about failure in two countries. In the case of Mexico, the failure is causal; in that of the United States, symbolic. Vicente Fox's political weakness at home is largely the result of his failed attempt at browbeating George W. Bush into declaring what would amount, *de facto*, to an open-borders policy; Bush's inability to devise a sensible immigration policy serving American interests symbolizes a failed administration recklessly and wantonly squandered on what promises to become all-consuming warfare in the Middle East. Granted, Mexican and American political failure are as culturally specific as the countries and their institutions that they represent. And cynicism, of course, knows no borders. Is it sufficiently recognized, however, that the more idealistic, humanitarian, and patriotic the rhetoric of America's leadership, the more cynical its motives and actions? President Bush's concern for his own legislative proposal is not one whit more humane or "democratic" than Vicente Fox's—not the conclusion Americans have been taught to expect from a comparison between an American president and his Mexican counterpart. Indeed, Señor Fox's interest in "regularizing" the status of the 8 to 12 million Mexicans illegally resident in the United States is, if anything, more sincere than that of Mr. Bush, who requires the gratitude of the Mexican-"American" community only in the short run (for a period of about 15 hours on Tuesday, November 2, 2004, to be exact).

For this reason, it can scarcely matter for President Bush and his dark familiar, Karl Rove, whether his ill-conceived and misbegotten program is approved by Congress—so long, that is, as the President gets credit from *La raza* for having tried. And that is just as well for him, since, most probably, it will *not* be passed, for the very good reason that no one but the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Bush's Robot Republicans, and the neoconservatives seems to want this one. (John Podhoretz is looking forward to the day when Mexican immigrants "transform not only the political debate in the United States but the Republican Party as well.") Under the close direction of Mr. Rove, the President has been careful to avoid the use of the word *amnesty*, except to deny that amnesty *is* amnesty; but we seem to have passed beyond such puerile semantic tricks. (Progress!—at last? "Every step forward is made at the cost of mental and physical pain to someone," said Nietzsche.) In summary, Bush would give legal work permits to most of the illegal aliens presently in the country; allow businesses to import foreign workers to fill jobs after posting them on a website for American citizens to grab off first (*i.e.*, fast); grant guest workers and illegals alike a three-year work permit, renewable indefinitely; and allow guest workers to enter the United States with their entire families and businesses to import as many workers as they claim to require.

The right is not amused; the left, which can never be amused, is indignant. La Raza and the League of United Latin American Citizens claim that illegals who expose themselves under the plan have no guarantee of eventual citizenship or even that they will be permitted to remain in the United States at all. The labor unions, eager to make hay among the illegals already in the country, gag at the thought of importing *more* cheap labor from among the world's huddled masses. The President's popularity, as measured by the polls, plummeted directly after the plan was unveiled in a burst of multicultural hoopla at the White House at the beginning of January, while, in the most unlikely quarters, they seem to be getting the message—at last. (The *Los Angeles Times*, on January 25, printed an article explicitly making the connection between California's economic and demographic disasters and the immigrant invasion.) And so, as noted by Roy Beck, George W. Bush took a step back from his own brainchild in his State of the Union Address, where he referred to it in highly generalized terms in a single paragraph near the end of the speech, "asking" for unspecified changes in American immigration policy. Beck observed further the relative silence with which this portion of the address was received.

We may get immigration "reform"—or again, we may not. If "reform" *does* come, it is likely to be through stealth and in silence, unaccompanied by the usual bullying shouts from the bully pulpit.

—*Chilton Williamson, Jr.*

ANOTHER SUPER BOWL has come and gone, and this one was a real bodice ripper. While the game was one of the closest contests in the 38-year history of the quest for the Vince Lombardi Trophy, most of the press coverage focused on the last two seconds of the *AOL Halftime Show, Produced by MTV*. Quarterback Tom Brady of the New England Patriots was no doubt pleased that his team's last-second victory was quickly overshadowed by the curve of Janet Jackson's breast.

Parents and other interested parties expressed shock and awe, flooding the CBS switchboards with angry protestations: Whose idea was it to have the metrosexual Justin Timberlake tear off half of Janet ("Ms. Jackson, if you're nasty") Jackson's Nazi dominatrix top, leaving nothing between our eyes and her breast, save a small, round metallic decoration? Were CBS executives aware that Timberlake planned to act out the words "Gonna have you nekkid by the end of this song"? Will CBS ever allow MTV to produce another halftime show? (Does it matter that both networks are owned by Viacom?) Must our children be subjected to such sights "during the dinner hour"? We, the parents of America, demand answers!

The FCC, we have been assured, is launching a full-scale investigation, and, by the time you read this, Timberlake and Jackson may be in Guantanamo Bay, awaiting trial for deliberate "wardrobe malfunction" (to borrow a phrase from Timberlake), despite the tepid apologies issued by Timberlake, Jackson, CBS, MTV, and

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the National Football League.

In the end, however, it is the parents of America who ought to be brought up on charges for the perverted message they have sent to their children by singling out the two-second-long breast-exposing affair as the only halftime event that put their children in Grave Moral Danger.

Nearly every other two-second segment of the halftime show was laden with lasciviousness. Take your pick: Kid Rock, draped in the American flag, singing about "crack-heads," "hookers," and his "heros at the methadone clinics"; Nelly (a male rapper) grabbing himself amongst strippers, wondering when he can "shoot his steam," and adding "It's hot in here / so take off all your clothes"; or Timberlake's and Jackson's entire performance, which can only be described as one extended sex act. How, exactly, did Janet Jackson's breast stand out against this background?

The records made by Timberlake, Jackson, Nelly, Kid Rock, and all of their millionaire friends are filled with explicit references to sex. With that in mind, consider the all-too-typical comments made by Michigan Governor (and mother of three) Jennifer Granholm, who called the bodice-ripping "outrageous": "Janet Jackson is a role model to girls, whether we like it or not; Justin Timberlake, same thing to young boys. . . . Enough is enough." There we have it: Pornographers are role models—but a bare breast? Now that's too much!

FCC chief Michael Powell has announced that he hopes to levy fines of $27,500 on every CBS affiliate that broadcast Nipplegate. How much should parents who allow porn stars to be role models for their children be assessed?

—*Aaron D. Wolf*

ADMINISTRATIVE SUBPOENAS, an innovative method of bypassing Fourth Amendment prohibitions against unreasonable search and seizure, first cropped up (at least publicly) in the draft of PATRIOT II that was exposed by the Center for Public Integrity in February 2003. Unlike a warrant, an administrative subpoena does not have to be approved by a judge. It is simply drawn up by an FBI agent in the course of an investigation and presented to a third party to force that person or business to hand over information about you—in other words, essentially a warrantless search.

Administrative subpoenas were one of the reasons that the public reaction to PATRIOT II was so swift and so severe—especially among the civil-libertarian denizens of the World Wide Web. The Justice Department quickly backpedaled; within weeks, PATRIOT II was dead.

From its ashes arose Orrin Hatch's VICTORY Act, which ostensibly concerned drug-dealing rather than terrorism and homeland security. In drafts of VICTORY circulated in August 2003, administrative subpoenas were back with a vengeance. Now, they had a specific target—internet service providers—and a further ominous aspect: Any ISP presented with an administrative subpoena targeting one of its customers could be ordered not to inform that customer (or anyone else, for that matter) "of the existence of the subpoena . . ." To remove any qualms that the ISP might have about complying with this draconian order, Section 504 of the VICTORY Act declared that the ISP "shall not be liable in any court of any State or the United States to any customer or other person for such production or for nondisclosure of that production to the customer . . ." And nothing restricted the use of administrative subpoenas to obtaining information on suspected drug dealers. Again, the public outcry was intense, and VICTORY was dead within months.

Now, it appears, the Ashcroft Justice Department has learned from its mistakes. Unfortunately, the lesson it seems to have taken from the experience of PATRIOT II and VICTORY is not that it should not infringe further upon the constitutional rights of the American people but that it should not do so quite so publicly. And so, on December 13, 2003—a Saturday, not a usual day for government business—President Bush signed into law the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004, which included a vastly expanded version of the administrative subpoena, now rebranded a "National Security Letter" (NSL). Because of its secretive nature, the intelligence act received no public—and very little congressional—scrutiny. Even so, it appears the Bush administration was taking no chances: The NSL provision "was written into the bill at the 11th hour over the objections of members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which would normally have jurisdiction over the FBI," says Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX).

The NSL provision allows an FBI agent to demand the release of any information that he deems relevant to a national-security investigation from any "financial institution"—which includes not only banks but insurance companies, brokerage houses, real-estate firms, travel agencies, car dealerships, jewelry stores, casinos, and (perhaps most ominously) the U.S. Postal Service. As in the drafts of VICTORY, the business is forbidden to notify its customer.

December 13, by the way, was the day that the U.S. military captured Saddam Hussein, an event which kept all mention of the Intelligence Authorization Act and NSL's out of the major media. Do you feel any safer now?

—*Scott P. Richert*

OBITER DICTA: Our poet this month is **Barton Sutter**, who writes from Duluth, Minnesota. He is the author *A Cold Comfort: Life at the Top of the Map* and *My Father's War: Stories of Midwestern Men* as well as several collections of verse, including *Cedarhome: poems*, *The Book of Names: New and Selected Poems*, and *Pine Creek Parish Hall and Other Poems*.

Our interior art is provided by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University, and he attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.

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by Thomas Fleming

"Walk Like a Man, Talk Like a Man"

My father believed in progress almost to the end of his life, when changing his mind would scarcely have made any difference. Like most liberals, he regarded traditional institutions as so many barriers to man's continued improvement, and yet, like most good men who are liberals, his head was contradicted by his heart: He despised the British monarchy, but he was willing to fight to defend the rights of the Stuarts.

Liberals are almost always wrong in their principles, but that does not automatically make them bad men. I do not think my father necessarily believed in the institution of marriage *per se*, but he was intensely loyal to his own wife, and he despised men who broke the marriage bond. He disliked any display of nationalism and viewed the flag-waving, oath-taking chauvinism of the 1950's with contempt; yet, at the outbreak of World War II, he enlisted more than once in the Marines, though, each time, the irregularity of his diphtheria-scarred heart betrayed him to the medical examiners.

Though he made no complaints against homosexuals, he loathed actors (among other effeminate men), especially actors who came to imagine that they were as tough as the heroes they portrayed. I can imagine him coming to me now and asking what had happened to American men that so many had gone homosexual or had become so effeminate that they drove their wives into lesbianism; what sort of judges and legislators we had that they could even conceive of the possibility of "gay marriage." What would any of us, looking our liberal parents and grandparents in the eye, say of such things?

Let us begin by stating what was obvious to my father. The problem does not lie with homosexuality *per se* or with homosexuals. My childhood piano teacher, for example, was the only well-known homosexual in my hometown. He was also one of the few communists and, although he left school in the sixth grade, the only person in godforsaken Superior who had read Goethe—and in German. My father, defending his friend from the usual barroom insults, took on several men who held his arm against a red-hot stove until it burned the skin and flesh off. I have always believed that he was unquestionably right to defend his friend, my teacher, who did not prey upon the innocent or corrupt the uncorrupted.

We all have moral demons to grapple with, even the saints. In my father's case, it was the curse of the Irish, which he successfully managed throughout his life, and arrogance, which he never mastered. The private miseries of the "gay" are not my problem, and, in a healthy society that upheld positive ideals of the masculine and the feminine, homosexuals would always constitute a fringe element, as they did in the 1950's, when they were confined not to their closets—that is the lie they tell now—but to their own social sphere. A Christian moral dictator, if he were sensible, would not try to eliminate or persecute homosexuals, any more than he would try to eliminate gambling, prostitution, or fornication. Tacitus' definition of a wise ruler is still a good one: "To know all, but not to follow up on everything."

The "queer" (to use their own favorite term) we shall always have with us. Living, as I have lived, in Charleston and San Francisco, I have numbered more than the usual amount of homosexuals among my teachers, workmates, friends, and acquaintances. Some were otherwise honorable people, like my French professor who once begged me to get him out of a bar before the young hustlers enticed him into a compromising situation. Others were not. I once taught in a classics department with an effeminate and obviously homosexual married colleague. Because he was poorly trained and unbearably silly (giving papers on Catullan echoes in Frankie Avalon's "Venus"), I avoided him, but I told my wife repeatedly that he would come to a bad end. I did not know how bad. He was ultimately convicted of molesting his son on two continents. Some of his colleagues have defended him, arguing that he should retain his position in a society that takes college students abroad. After all, they said, there is no evidence that he molested anyone outside of his immediate family. I wish I were making this up, but that is the state of the humanities in American universities today, where college teachers who die of AIDS have awards named in their honor.

The problem, I repeat, is not with homosexuality *per se* or with homosexuals. In nearly every known society, some number (often quite small) of human beings chromosomally male will fail, for one reason or another, to become fully men. With some, the failure takes the form of effeminacy and timidity, but, in other cases, males who are outwardly as tough and virile as an NFL quarterback will find other males, either some of the time or all of the time, sexually attractive.

In some societies, passionate relationships between men are permitted, up to a point, though they are often circumscribed by ceremonies and restrictions. These customs may become so complicated that it is difficult—even impossible—to know to what extent actual sexual relations were permitted. Among young Athenian males in the fifth century, for example, there was a fair amount of hanky-panky, though the ideal was stated more in terms of passionate friendship than of physical consummation. Whatever they did or did not do with one another in their late teens, however, most Greek men expected to marry and beget children, and, if erotic art, love poetry, and ribald comedy are correct, men who cheated on their wives chased women more often than men.

For the Athenians, heterosexuality was a mainstream and everyday necessity, while homosexual relations were occasional, restricted to youth and young manhood, and optional. "Gayness," as it is known today in America—that is, a primary or exclusive orientation toward other men—was viewed as bizarre and unwholesome. Such people would be warned not to attend meetings of the assembly (in other words, they lost their political rights) on pain of death.

The problem today is, therefore, not with homosexuals or even with the "gay rights" agenda promoted by homosexual organizations. Most people would love to exploit their problems to secure special privileges. In America today, lame people have rights, short people have rights—to say nothing of people who claim to be allergic to peanuts or perfume or a steady

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job. As annoying as the whining of the privileged masses can be, it is no worse (considering the general collapse of civilization) than an annoyance.

In the parallel case of the "women's" movement, the problem with feminism has little to do with individual women trying to get better jobs or higher salaries that they do not deserve but with the feminist ideology that denies the reality of what they call "sexual identity" and the special roles that men and women are called upon to play. Similarly, the problem with the movement to legislate "gay marriage" is not with the few homosexuals who foolishly want to take on the legal and economic burdens that the anti-Christian U.S. government imposes on married couples but with the ideology of homosexualism, an ideology created and sustained by far more heterosexuals than homosexuals.

I have neither the interest nor the stomach to trace the complete history of the homosexualist ideology. Part of it clearly derives from Renaissance Hellenism, which was not merely a discovery of the Greek language and literature but the deliberate use of ancient Greek culture as a weapon against the Church. The Medici family, which supported the neoplatonist conspiracy against Christianity, nourished every vice, and it is no accident that the last of the ugly lot, so memorably described by Harold Acton, lay in bed all day in a drunken stupor, rousing himself only to observe the sexual antics of the ragamuffins he hired to enflame his imagination.

The men of the Enlightenment were fornicators and adulterers but not, for the most part, homosexual. Odd things went on at the Palais Royal, but still odder is Voltaire's famous statement about sodomy: that once makes you a philosopher, twice makes you a pervert. Why in the world would an act of sodomy constitute a philosophical act? Precisely because a heterosexual finds it disgusting. It breaks down an important barrier between the world of normal experience, restricted by categories of sex, age, status, and nationality, and the completely open world of undifferentiated individuals advocated by liberal intellectuals since the 18th century.

Voltaire's statement has to be read in a wider context: Repellent acts are often a requirement in initiation rituals: Aspiring gangbangers may have to commit a murder, and initiates into Hell's Angels were given a particularly repulsive erotic (heterosexual) chore to perform. The greatest of the *philosophes*, the Marquis de Sade, took the Enlightenment to its ultimate conclusion. God did not exist; religion and morality were invented to repress mankind; therefore, rape, torture, and multisexual orgies were all part of a program for liberating the human spirit from the shackles of Christianity. Like his disciples today, Sade opposed capital punishment and favored abortion—the opposite of the historic Christian position. For Sade, as for liberals today, abortion and homosexualism are merely different aspects of the same campaign to destroy the connection between sex and procreation.

Feminism is another, and women can only be fully liberated if they kill their children. Some men, however timidly, continue to draw the line at eliminating their genetic future, but heterosexual American males who cannot have an abortion themselves and would not dream of encouraging a wife or daughter to kill a child can, nonetheless, take part in the Sadean revolution by breaking down the barrier between masculinity and femininity. I cannot be the only older man in America who finds most young men unbearably epicene. Even the macho louts who pinch waitresses and harass women on the street pouf their hair, pour on perfume, and talk with a voice as drained of masculinity as any NPR announcer.

When was the last time you heard a young *man's* voice on NPR? (Bob Edwards is an old guy like me.) When was the last time you saw a major film with a manly male under 50? Who are the stars today? Pick them at random: Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt, George Clooney, Matt Damon, Ben Affleck, Leonardo DiCaprio, Elijah Wood. *Elijah Wood?* What film genius decided to portray Frodo as a testosterone-deprived homosexual? (No, I haven't seen the movie. There are a lot of things I have not done and do not intend to do, and you probably do not want me so much as to name them.) None of these celluloid gentlemen is virile enough to qualify for the position of eunuch in a seraglio, but they, presumably, are inspiring the erotic dreams of the Wal-Mart clerks, Methodist pastorettes, and high-school English teachers who go to movies.

Metrosexual is the codeword used to destigmatize and celebrate the effeminate and the epicene, and soft-voiced metrosexuals are everywhere displacing men, as in Don Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. They are everywhere on television, selling cars, wooing bachelorettes, pontificating on the political events that they do not understand, posing as ministers of the Gospel.

Most of the girlie boys on TV (to borrow Ann Coulter's phrase) are not homosexuals, but they present a problem that is far worse. Homosexuals, after a certain number of years, are what they are, and their choice (for most of them) is being "gay" or being celibate. Of course, they were not predestined by their genes or childhood, but each of us is the sum total of experiences, our own and our ancestors'. "I am a part of all that I have met," declared Tennyson's Ulysses, and, if Ulysses were one of the nice guys on *Queer Eye*, he would have a hard time turning himself into Gary Cooper.

But the epicenes and Ganymedes are self-created out of fear—fear of conflict, fear of social disapproval, fear of women, fear of being men, and fear of having to take the responsibility that men have to take.

Perhaps their fathers never took them fishing or gave them a pair of boxing gloves. Whatever the reason, whether it is out of fear or wilderness deprivation, or—what is more likely—because they have willingly signed on to the left's Sadean agenda, the metrosexuals are promoting homosexualism in ways that no homosexual can. My own conclusion is that we should leave the "gays" to their own world and save our anger and disgust for the high-voiced, soft-palmed, hair-waved, nonjudgmental, unthreatening unmale nonpersons who will soon be putting the last real men onto tribal homelands.

We might start with the girlie boys who bray so loudly for wars that they will never fight in. Since so many of the "chicken hawks" have never landed a bass or shot a duck or decked (or been decked by) an enemy, they might benefit from a treatment of shock-virility. Perhaps Chilton Williamson could take them on an elk hunt, or they could go down to Florida and spend two weeks with Bill Mills, learning to drive a truck, fish, and drink like a man. Roger McGrath could teach them how to surf and scrap; Chris Check could try to make Marines of them. Then Aaron Wolf could take them deer hunting on Dan Harrington's farm or, better still, beat them into repentance. After all, Jack Palance made a man out of one Billy Crystal (at least in the movie). Think what a few *Chronicles* editors could do with the others. c

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Another Country

by Barton Sutter

First wife, lost friend, sad ghost
My long amnesia lifts at last,
And guess what memory haunts me most.
More than fifteen years have passed

Since we caught the bus to Ullapool
But failed to ditch the damned tourists
Who swarmed like minnows in a school.
We'd crossed an ocean to come to this?

Mobs of Americans everywhere.
I sulked in a corner of our B & B,
Numb with anger, cold despair,
Knocking back the gold whiskey.

You coaxed me out to take a meal,
Where we met a boy from Aberdeen
Just back from hiking in the hills.
Shy but warm, windburned and lean,

He looked so much like our dead friend,
The one you'd once betrayed me with,
We didn't want the talk to end.
He told us we'd been tricked by myth

But sympathized and laughed a lot.
"The Highlands crawl with nice tourists
Who'd like to meet authentic Scots.
The trouble is, we don't exist."

That night we found a loud Ceilidh
And met a singer my brother knew
Whose northern hospitality
Included a room and brown homebrew.

Why didn't I dance with you that night?
I ordered one more glass of booze,
Stiff, as usual, too uptight,
And focused on those boots and shoes

That thumped so hard they had me asking
How the floor could bear the load.
They finished with that wild anthem:
You take the high road, and I'll take the low road . . .

And I recall Scotland without you.
We won't be bending over pics
To reminisce. Like me, no doubt, you
Try to forget what can't be fixed.

Remember, though, how we drove that night
To the singer's village of Rosehall,
And how, in the mist, our bright headlights
Caught the flight of a short-eared owl?

And then another and another,
Rising off the steaming road,
Two dozen, maybe, altogether.
Each time, of course, the driver slowed,

And time did, too, till we were back
In a supernatural Scottish ballad,
Flush with omens, knights who hack
Through steel and mail to bone and blood.

We hoped our driver wasn't lost.
Each owl gave our nerves a thrill,
Fluttered like a great, soft moth,
And left us happy, hushed, and chilled.

We wandered Europe hand in hand,
Less like lovers than two friends
Who couldn't start to understand
How the fairy tale would end.

Back home, we learned to curse and howl
And found an ocean we could not cross.
These days, when I recall those owls,
They rise as ghosts of all we lost.

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by Roger D. McGrath

Whose Atrocities?

The Last Samurai is the latest movie to treat us to the spectacle of the U.S. Army slaughtering American Indian women and children. Playing a disillusioned captain, Tom Cruise suffers from nightmares for his role in the dastardly deed. He finds honor and redemption as a Great White Samurai in Japan. Many movie reviewers have criticized the $120-million epic for making Cruise the King Kong of Samurais. None have criticized the movie for its portrayal of Cruise and the Boys in Blue killing squaws and papooses.

What is most surprising about the Army's campaigns in the Old West is how few women and children were killed, although you would never know it from Hollywood portrayals after the mid-60's. Moreover, such deaths were almost always unintentional and a consequence of skirmishes and battles taking place in or near Indian villages. This contrasts sharply with Indian warfare. When one tribe caught another by surprise, wholesale slaughter of women and children was common. The same was true when Indians caught whites by surprise.

From the southern plains to the northern plains, from 1850 to 1890, it is difficult to find an engagement in which more than a few Indian women or children were killed. Only Wounded Knee, at the very end of the period, would be a significant exception, and, in that case, the Indians started the fight, and explosive rounds from the Army's Hotchkiss guns were the cause of most of the indiscriminate killing. More typical was the Battle of Rush Creek, in the Texas Panhandle in the fall of 1858. Maj. Earl Van Dorn led some 200 soldiers and 150 Indian allies against a Comanche village at dawn. After an hour of battle, the Indians broke off the engagement and fled, leaving behind 56 dead warriors and two dead squaws. Although seriously wounded, Van Dorn recovered in time to lead his men in the Battle of Crooked Creek during the spring of 1859. Again, the battle involved an entire band of Comanche—men, women, and children—but left only warriors dead, 49 of them by Army count. Thirty-two women were taken prisoner.

It was no different on the northern plains or in the Great Basin. During the late summer of 1855, Gen. William Harney reached Ash Hollow in western Nebraska, where he caught up with the band of Brule that had been responsible for the Grattan massacre. The ensuing battle left 85 warriors dead and 70 women and children prisoners. In Utah, at the Bear River, Col. Patrick Edward Connor met Chief Bear Hunter and his Shoshones early in 1862. The Shoshones were in well-fortified positions and thought that they would make short work of Connor's boys, who were near exhaustion after a long march from California. The Shoshones did kill 21 soldiers and wounded many more but lost 224 themselves, all warriors. Some 160 women and children were taken prisoner. And so it went for the rest of the century.

Meanwhile, Indian rape, torture, and slaughter of white women and children were typical rather than exceptional. Such atrocities were perpetrated by the Comanche on the southern plains, the Apache in Arizona, the Shoshone in the Great Basin, the Cayuse on the Columbia River plateau, the Sioux on the northern plains, and by nearly all Indians between. This was not something that the Indians later regretted or held courts of inquiry about, nor was it something that they reserved for white women and children; it was what they did when they could.

The Santee Sioux uprising is but one example. During the summer of 1862, the Civil War interrupted the normal delivery of supplies, food, and money to the Sioux reservation in Minnesota. There was suffering on the reservation and the anticipation of dire consequences should the delivery be postponed for very much longer. The tension was exacerbated when most traders on the reservation, who had been selling goods to the Indians on credit, refused to accept any more debt. Then, some young Indian men stole eggs from a white farmer. They fell to arguing over the theft and, taunting one another about who was the bravest, returned to the farm and killed the farmer and his wife and children. This was the spark that caused a general Santee Sioux uprising.

Most of the whites in the region were taken entirely by surprise. Some of them were recent German immigrants, members of pietistic sects. Many had no arms, had shared their food with the Indians, and had shown them nothing but kindness. They were now butchered. Other whites suffered likewise, until more than a thousand of them lay dead. The atrocities committed by the Indians boggle the imagination. When a band of rampaging warriors rode up to Johann Schwandt's farm, they found the German repairing the roof of his cabin. They riddled him with bullets, killing the immigrant instantly. He was lucky. The Sioux then butchered his wife, his two sons, his pregnant daughter and her husband, and a hired hand. One of his sons, 12-year-old August, although bludgeoned by a tomahawk and slashed by knives, was somehow still alive and conscious. He watched as the Indians ripped open his sister's belly, pulled out the child, and nailed it to a tree.

Multiply the atrocity at the Schwandt's farm by a hundred, and you have an idea of what happened to unsuspecting white families. Women and girls were gang-raped, then tortured and killed. Many were dismembered while still alive. Small children were nailed to barn doors and posts. Most of the other corpses were decapitated and mutilated beyond recognition. All were scalped. The Sioux had an easy time of it. Most farmers had treated the Indians well and thought of them as friends. When bands of Sioux rode up to the farms, the families greeted them. The Indians smiled and then slaughtered the whites like cattle at a meat-packing plant.

Seen any of this in the movies lately?

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Boys Will Be Boys

(If Given Half a Chance)

by Roger D. McGrath

When my daughter, Katie, was in the fifth grade, her grammar school conducted a week-long series of tests inspired by the White House to promote physical fitness for schoolchildren. Children who completed the tests with passing marks—the standards for passing were not high—received a certificate from the President. The kids ran, jumped, and stretched, and performed sit-ups and pull-ups. Katie finished second overall—not second among all the girls in the school but second among all the girls *and* the boys. She finished first in pull-ups, doing 14 with perfect form and beating the runner-up, a boy, by four. I was happy with her performance but flabbergasted as well. How could a girl, even if she was a McGrath, beat all the boys in the school in pull-ups and all the boys, save one, overall?

Now I must confess that Katie was no stranger to pull-ups. She not only had taken a gymnastics class for several years but had worked on a high bar in our garage. At home, under ideal conditions and with her hands properly chalked, she had done 16 strict pull-ups—not bad for a grammar-school girl. Twenty pull-ups in the Marine Corps earns a Marine maximum points on the physical-fitness test. Nor was Katie a stranger to running. She had been a high-scoring forward on various soccer teams since she was five years old. She was a natural athlete and she was well trained. But she was a girl! I asked how the boys reacted to getting beaten by a girl. She said that most of them, with a few exceptions—most notably a freckle-faced strawberry blond named Ryan who had a temper that matched his complexion—simply accepted the fact. She then asked, "How would you feel, Dad, if I had beaten you when you were in grammar school?"

It was simply inconceivable, I told her. When another boy beat me at anything, I could not sleep, eat, or breathe until I got a chance for a rematch. A girl? No—this was unfathomable. And most boys were versions of me. We competed viciously. There was no such thing as friendly competition. If we could have killed our opponents, we would have been overjoyed. This went for kick ball, sock ball, two-square, dodge ball, softball—whatever game was in progress on the playground at the moment. A disputed call usually meant a fight, and no kid tried to break it up. Quite the opposite. It was one of the great moments of the day and only stopped when a teacher spied the commotion and raced across the blacktop to the scene. By then, the fighters were usually near exhaustion anyway. We talked about the fight the rest of the day and relished the battle while staring at the clock in the classroom. If you were in the fight and acquitted yourself admirably, you were a hero.

We competed at everything. Walking home turned into a sprint to the big oak tree on the corner or a series of standing broad jumps or one-legged hops—any and everything that could pit boys against one another. I delivered newspapers on my bicycle in the afternoon. At least once a week, after folding our papers and arranging them in our canvas bags, all of us paperboys at our "corner" would race off to see who could complete his route and be back at the corner first. On the next corner were paperboys who delivered a competing afternoon newspaper—television had not yet destroyed the printed word. We would sweep down on their corner in a surprise bicycle-propelled attack and hurl water bombs or ride through their stacks of folded papers, shredding them with our bicycle chains. They would do the same to us. Fights erupted. For some reason, our corner regularly got the better of our rivals, so much so that their paper boss, Vern, came by early one day and shoved us around.

We told our paper boss, Royal Harvey, about it. His regular schedule meant that he would arrive at our corner well after Vern had made his deliveries. Royal told us he would change his schedule for a special appearance come tomorrow afternoon. The next day, we were there early, eagerly awaiting the anticipated confrontation. The other paper boss was quite a bit taller and heavier than Royal, but Royal was one hard character. He was from Grass Valley—an old mining town in the Sierra foothills—and wore blue jeans, T-shirts, and cowboy boots. He was lean and muscular, with bulging biceps that came from working out while doing time in prison. His taut skin stretched across an angular, leathery face that suggested no softness. He looked like a cross between Johnny Cash and Bob Mitchum. He was also tough as nails. I watched early on a Sunday morning when a paper-tying machine malfunctioned and sent a wire, the thickness of a coat hanger, through Royal's hand. Gritting his teeth and grunting, he pulled the wire back through his hand and simply tied a handkerchief around the wound and kept going. Royal was *our* paper boss, and we could not have been more proud.

As promised, Royal arrived early. We could hardly contain ourselves. I remember feeling as if I were about to burst. Crowding around Royal, we marched to our rivals' corner. Vern was busy stacking and counting papers for his boys when one of them called attention to our approach. The man who had been such a tough character while shoving us paperboys around the day before suddenly looked like he very much regretted his earlier actions. Before Vern could say much, Royal threw a combination of punches that knocked the rival paper boss against a concrete-block wall. Out on his feet, Vern began to slide to the ground, as Royal grabbed him by the neck and said, slowly and distinctly, "If you ever touch one of my boys again, I'll kill you." Vern knew Royal meant it. Vern's paperboys knew Royal meant it. We knew Royal meant it. We were stoked.

Royal was one of our mentors. We could not have been luck-

Corresponding editor Roger D. McGrath is the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes.

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ier. One of the duties of paperboys was to solicit for new subscriptions—"starts," as we called them. We got paid a dollar for a start—good money for a kid in the 50's. If a start was in your route's area, then you had another delivery and an additional 50 cents per month. In the evenings, we would go from house to house, like trick-or-treaters, and pitch our afternoon newspaper, the *Mirror News*, and our morning newspaper, the *Los Angeles Times*. We would occasionally see signs next to the front doors: NO SOLICITORS! Royal told us to ignore them. The signs were for adult solicitors, he said. Just smile and tell them about the newspaper.

Since we all loved explosions, Royal gave us a bonus in cherry bombs if we got over a certain number of starts in a month. Money was certainly an incentive, but the carrot of cherry bombs inspired us to solicit with a vengeance. Although it was 40 years too early for the phenomenon of gated communities, there was a prominent exception—the Malibu Colony. It was impossible for any solicitors to get past the gate guard; the Colony was virgin territory for starts. The possibilities inside the Colony were dazzling—if only we could gain access. One night, Royal told us he had a surprise for us. He drove us up the coast highway to the Colony and parked well away from the gate. Warning us to maintain silence, he led us to the high, ivy-covered, heavy chain-link fence that provided part of the barrier for the Colony. He pulled back some of the ivy and then a small section of the fence that had been cut and exclaimed, "Look what I found!" We crawled through and had our best night of soliciting ever. No one gave much thought to the bolt cutters that Royal had sitting among his tools.

I used to try to "porch" as many papers as possible. Customers loved to see their paper sitting on their welcome mat or resting against their front doors. Tips could be good, 25 cents or more per month. I quickly came to understand trajectory. I was able to hurl a paper well before my intended doorstep while riding at full speed and watch the paper whirl through the air like a chopper blade across another house's lawn and driveway before it came to rest on my target. I got so I could do this forehand or backhand depending on the side of the street a subscriber's house was on. We paperboys competed in throws, too. The guys had different styles of throwing as well as different ways of folding the papers for flight. Folding configurations were hotly debated. In addition to everything else, we were primitive aeronautical engineers.

My enthusiasm for porching customers' papers resulted in some spectacular crashes on my bike and a few serious injuries. Others suffered likewise. We took all the cuts, scrapes, bruises, and broken bones in stride. Today, there would be lawsuits. Because of its distance from the street, one house in particular gave me fits when trying for a doorstep landing. One day, when the wind was right, providing just enough lift, I let loose with a throw that sent the paper whirling through the air like a boomerang. "I'm finally going to porch it," I thought. A few seconds later, I saw the paper not only reach the porch but hit a screen door and rip through it. I could hear the tearing sound all the way from the street. "Oh, sh-t!" I silently exclaimed. I swung my bike around and pedaled up to the house. My customer was not only home but had been sitting in the living room when the paper tore through the screen. He told me that the paper had continued on its journey, sliding down the front hallway and into the living room before coming to a rest. He also told me that this was just a bit more service than he needed. I said that I would cover the costs for the repair, while thinking that those costs would probably amount to a month's pay.

I was one dejected kid. A month's pay! Paperboys for the *Mirror News* not only delivered the paper six afternoons per week but also had to "collect" at the end of the month. Collecting was an enormous hassle. Some customers were always home and had the cash ready for me. Others seemed never to be home. I had one customer, a contractor, who would hand me a hundred-dollar bill (something like $500 today), knowing that I could not possibly make change. The next time I would show up, his wife would tell me that her husband handled all the money and that he was away on a job. Sometimes, despite my best efforts, a few customers fell several months in arrears. On the other hand, like every other paperboy, I had to have the paper there every day, come rain or high water. I delivered my papers with a cast on my arm, with a broken jaw wired shut, with fevers, with the flu. If we did not deliver, we did not get paid.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich

Royal lived only a couple houses away from the customer whose screen lay shredded. He heard about my Mickey Mantle shot later the same day and, the next morning, without telling me, installed a new screen—on his own time and with his own money. Royal was our guy.

Afternoon daily newspapers and paperboys are mostly a thing of the past. Even if television news had not destroyed the market for an afternoon paper, liability lawsuits would probably have destroyed the delivery job for boys. We do have a free weekly paper in our area that is delivered during the afternoon—by illegal aliens on foot. If paperboys are nearly extinct, so, too, is the kind of fighting that was commonplace when I was young: two boys, fairly evenly matched, meeting at a predetermined location, squaring off, and trying to beat the tar out of each other. Back in the 80's, one of my nephews, Sean, was a senior in high school. He was an all-league football player who could be ornery at times. He got in a few altercations at parties and other venues where teenagers gathered. Yet, he told me that fights were infrequent and that a scheduled fight—as opposed to some spontaneous eruption at a party—was a rare event. Both forms of fighting were common when I was young.

Fights were *affaires d'honneur*. It was usually about nothing more—but then nothing counts more—than who was tougher. Fighting began in grammar school. Everybody knew who was toughest in the fifth and sixth grades, and who was second toughest, and third. Given class photos, I could still list the top half-dozen in each grade. It was everything to us at that age. The rankings were not arbitrary but based on numerous fights.

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Any new guy in school was immediately put to the test—if he thought he was tough. "Do you think you can take Tom? How about Mike?" If he answered in the affirmative, a fight was scheduled for after school. The fights only got better in junior high and high school.

Little was ever done to stop any of these fights. They occurred between two willing scrappers without weapons. Most fathers approved. Most mothers remained silent. There were exceptions, of course, perhaps foreshadowing the attitude of many parents today. I remember some guy in junior high telling us, "My father told me it takes more of a man to walk away from a fight than to fight." Every one of us who had been in fights knew that was consummate bullsh-t. We also knew that the kid's old man must be a coward. Fighting was an act of great courage, especially when you had to think about it for a day or two or sometimes a week before a scheduled event. There were no guarantees of victory, and, by junior high, guys were big enough and strong enough to injure their opponents—seriously. Broken bones—noses, jaws, hands, fingers, and arms—were common, as was the loss of teeth. Even if a guy lost a fight, he was respected just for showing up.

Once upon a time, we were a warrior race, honor-bound to stand and fight. Boys knew that this was part of their destiny from childhood on—they had an instinct, and it was expected of them.

Such a fight occurred in high school between "Mugsy" Green and Bill, a kid who had recently transferred from an Eastern prep school. Bill had done or said something that caused Mugsy to challenge him to fight. To everyone's surprise, Bill accepted. Although Bill was more than a half-foot taller than Mugsy and seemed to be in reasonably good shape, he looked like what he was—a prep-school boy. Mugsy, on the other hand, was not given his nickname by accident. He had a very prominent Celtic chin and the demeanor of Jack Dempsey. Standing not much over 5'6", he was 165 pounds of muscle, bone, and sinew. He appeared to have been chiseled out of granite. Put Levis and a T-shirt on a pit bull and stand him upright, and you have Mugsy. When we all started boxing, years before at the local park under the direction of "Mac" McDougall, Mugsy hit Mac so hard during a sparring session—and we were using big, heavy gloves—that it almost lifted Mac off his feet. Mac was shocked that a kid could hit so hard. The rest of us were already well aware of the fact.

As a sizeable crowd gathered at the designated location for the fight, Mugsy casually leaned against a car and told stories. He was one of the best storytellers I have ever known and had a sense of humor that was a combination of George Carlin and Don Rickles. Mugsy could leave us laughing until our guts hurt. When the scheduled time for the fight passed and Bill had not arrived, smart money was betting that he would be a no-show. Just about then, prep boy arrived in a car driven by his father. Mugsy looked disgusted and said sarcastically, "He's brought his daddy." To our surprise and amusement, Bill inserted a mouthpiece and then began doing a series of warm-up exercises. The Mugs could not believe what he was seeing and exclaimed, "What's this sh-t?!" The crowd roared.

Bill finally announced that he was ready to fight. Mugsy took off his jacket and stepped forward as Bill began to move and jab. He had obviously done some boxing. Mugsy slipped or deflected the jabs, got within range, jabbed and feinted, and let a tremendous left hook rip. It landed flush on Bill's jaw and sent him to the ground. Mugsy looked down into Bill's glassy, unfocused eyes and said, "I didn't think he'd show up. He's got guts." The fight had lasted less than 30 seconds, but prep boy gained a lot of respect.

Good high-school street fighters gained reputations that spread from local neighborhoods and towns through Los Angeles and even Southern California. During the mid-50's, the McKeever twins, Mike and Marlon, who lived near Westwood but went to a Catholic high school in Central Los Angeles, had fearsome reputations for fighting. They both went on to become All-American football players at Southern Cal. A year or two later, Santa Monica was talking about the O'Mahoney brothers and Owen "Megaton" Miller. Up in the Palisades, we had O.T. Crippen and Pat O'Neal. O'Neal, later known by his middle name Ryan, was one tough fighter long before he appeared in the television series *Peyton Place* and then in such movies as *Love Story* and *What's Up Doc?* His father, "Blackie" O'Neal, had him training in boxing gyms years before he was taking acting lessons. His mother, Patricia Callaghan O'Neal, an actor herself, did not interfere. If Pat O'Neal had been a little bit bigger, he might have seriously pursued a career in boxing. With no cruiserweight division in those days, he found himself a bit big for the light-heavyweight division and a bit small for the heavyweight.

O'Neal had a wild temper and fought frequently. He was fast, had a good punch, and was fairly well trained. Later in life, his movie roles—such as a quiet, bumbling, retiring professor playing opposite Barbara Streisand—were stunningly incongruous for those of us who knew Ryan O'Neal when he was Pat. The O'Neals lived only about a half-block from my family, and Pat's little brother, Jeff (who would later go by Kevin), was in my grade at school. He was a smaller, red-haired, red-faced version of Pat. He had the same uncontrollable temper but was not nearly the fighter, which was fortunate for me because I fought him three or four times.

Pat, meanwhile, was knocking the stuffing out of most of those he faced. One of his best fights occurred in a vacant lot across the street from Vince's barbershop in the Palisades. Dave Diaz was considered one of the big baddies at University High in West Los Angeles, where O'Neal attended. In a powerful display of well-thrown punches, O'Neal battered Diaz into submission. O'Neal then turned to one of Diaz's buddies, Greg Latta, and asked him if he wanted some of the same. Latta, a well-built guy about O'Neal's size, assented, and a second fight was on. O'Neal should have quit while he was ahead. Latta had a wickedly quick and accurate jab and kept the tired O'Neal off balance. O'Neal's punches lacked the steam and the accuracy that they had in his first fight. Nonetheless, he kept firing, oc-

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casionally landing a blow, and Latta kept jabbing and peppering O'Neal's face. Finally, with both fighters exhausted, they called it quits. Those in the crowd had gotten more than their money's worth.

For weeks afterward, O'Neal's fights were the topic of conversation in the Palisades, especially in Vince's barbershop. We younger kids could see that the men simply relished the fights. I never heard a negative word about the violent two-for-one encounter in the center of town. There was praise for the fighters and speculation about upcoming fights.

A few years later, when I reached high school, my good buddy Scott McKenzie was the rising star of street fighting. He had already gained a fearsome reputation in junior high. By the ninth grade, he dominated the school. The principal finally expelled him for one too many fights. When he arrived at a new junior high, he found that some fellows who knew about him had already lined up a fight for him with the school's toughest guy. The two of them did not even make it to the end of the schoolday before they were tearing into each other. Scott's first day at the school was his last. He then went to a junior high in a different school district. He lasted three weeks before he was goaded into a fight with the school's number one badass. Scott pummeled him senseless. With a promise of good behavior, Scott was allowed to return to our junior high so he could graduate.

In the tenth grade, Scott, only 15 years old, was a two-way starter at tackle on the varsity football team. He tipped the scales at 225 pounds, yet was lean at that weight. He was not only the strongest but the fastest lineman on the team. Imagine Dick Butkus in high school, and you have Scott. Like Butkus, Scott loved to hit, to punish, to inflict damage. When he got his anger up, which was not infrequent, he was a force of nature. By the time he was a senior, he had fought and battered the best fighters at all the surrounding high schools. He then began to fight guys in college—wrestlers, football players, martial artists—anyone who thought he was tough.

One night, Scott and I got word that there was a UCLA fraternity party at a house up in Stone Canyon. The fraternity was hosting their sisters from the hottest sorority on campus. We were given a name to drop to get in the door. We rode to the party on our motorcycles—Scott, on his BSA; I, on my Matchless. That was a mistake, because it drew some attention to us. Soon, the fraternity brothers began asking one another, "Who are those two guys who drove up on the motorcycles?" It only got worse when we started dancing with their sorority sisters.

Quickly it was decided that "Animal," a bouncer legendary among the fraternities at UCLA, should eject us. I have to credit Animal for guts, if not for brains, because he walked up to us, ignored me, and focused on Scott. "You guys are leaving," Animal grunted. Scott stretched out his left arm, holding his hand in front of Animal's face and said, "Back off, pal." Animal, a ferocious character who had earned his nickname for such things as biting off ears, grabbed Scott's arm and chomped down on Scott's hand. Scott had badly injured the hand in an accident, and Animal happened to bite down on a metal plate holding bones in place. Not only would Animal's front teeth never be the same, but Scott now had him just where he wanted him. A crashing right hand sent Animal tumbling backward and sliding across a patio. The fraternity brothers stood in stunned disbelief: Not only had Scott showed no pain when Animal took his bite, but Animal had been knocked senseless. We strode out the front door—Scott was a great buddy to have in times like those—kick-started our bikes, did a few donuts on the front lawn for good measure, and roared off down the canyon.

Just when and why this all changed is not entirely clear. Part of it has to do with the drug culture of the late 60's and early 70's. I remember returning home from the service and seeing nearly everyone stoned and mellow rather than juiced and aggressive. All of a sudden, it had become cool to be pacifistic and cowardly. However, the drug-addled hippy-dippy counterculture faded rapidly with the end of the draft and with our withdrawal from Vietnam. A masculine culture might have returned but for a new movement. By the early 70's, the unfeminine feminist movement was gaining momentum: Men were evil (at least white men); strength and aggression were bad; competition was wicked; testosterone was pathogenic. Boys were no longer allowed to be boys and were punished in school unless they acted more like girls—sitting still in their chairs, paying attention to the teacher, not talking, not hitting, and not disrupting. If not, Ritalin was prescribed. Somehow, it was forgotten that we could get reasonably good behavior from boys if they were allowed to play fiercely competitive games at recess and to wrestle and punch one another until exhausted.

Once upon a time, we were a warrior race, honor-bound to stand and fight. In the Gaelic clans of old, "brother fought beside brother, father by son, so that each might witness the other's courage and valour and find example in them." Boys knew this was part of their destiny from childhood on—they had an instinct for it, and it was expected of them. Now, we try to feminize our boys, weaken them, even emasculate them. Fighting is left to craven inner-city gang members who rarely face off one-on-one and fight fair-and-square but, instead, shoot some unsuspecting gang rival while he loiters in front of a convenience store. Soldiering is left to a few professionals who do what every male—when we had an army of militia volunteers or citizen-soldiers—was formerly expected to do. We are undergoing the same kind of evolution—or devolution—that Rome experienced, only doing it so much faster. It is not an irreversible natural phenomenon, though. Man has done it, and man can undo it. It all begins with allowing boys to be boys—so that, one day, they can be men.

At Quaker Meeting

by Barton Sutter

We listen to the pigeons on the rooftop coo.
They're not your classic doves, but they will do.
The meeting house is musty, dim, and warm.
A girl unzips her coat. An elder folds his arms.
The silence deepens till we hear small rustlings,
Swallowing, slow breathing, someone's stomach
rumbling.
Where is the peace that passes understanding?
We breathe, stock-still, like cattle standing
At the feedbunks in the faint but rosy light,
Who don't complain or preach but simply stand and wait
For one who always comes, although he's sometimes
late,
Hoping to be touched on heavy brow or shoulderblade
By him who breaks the ice so they can guzzle water,
Who dumps and spreads the mounds of sweet and
fragrant fodder.

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"Gay Marriage"

From Genesis to Revelation, by Way of the *New Yorker*

by Hugh Barbour, O.Praem.

> At the beginning of 1999 . . . my wife Cathleen Schine, announced that she no longer wanted to be married to me. She had to leave, she had to get away for a new life, for she had mysteriously changed in her affections . . . I stood there like a rejected petitioner, chewing my innards but unwilling to fight. "I have to go to sleep now." "But I want to talk." Talk was the center, we used to talk over everything, endlessly . . . For almost two decades, I had felt that no thought of mine was complete until I had conveyed it to her . . . We spoke every day, we were amiable and affectionate . . . I was in a rage, but I suppressed it. Of what use was anger? I was determined not to become one of those embittered men encountered at work, at a party—men a little too articulate about "women."

Thus David Denby, movie critic at the *New Yorker*, describes his reaction to his novelist wife's leaving him in his brand new and not-particularly-recommended-here book *American Sucker*. What was it that had "mysteriously changed" in her affections? At least one thing for sure: She was leaving him for a *woman*. When we examine his response to her announcement, we can say that Mrs. Schine-Denby's move may have come as a surprise to Mr. Denby, but it is definitely no mystery. It is one individual instance of a species whose "genesis" I will describe here, using the second chapter of the homonymous book, without even needing to refer much to the nineteenth, in the hope that some reader may, by serious reflection on what follows, begin, even if only slowly at first, to flee his moral Decapolis (Manhattan? L.A.? Vermont? Massachusetts? Crawford, Texas?) without looking back—not before, but because, it is too late.

> If it was not for help in producing children that a wife was made for the man, then what other help was she made for? If it was to till the earth together with him, then there was as yet no hard toil to need such assistance; and if there had been the need, a male would have made a better help. While if it was expedient that one should be in charge and that the other comply, to avoid a clash of wills disturbing the peace of the household, such an arrangement would have been ensured by one being made first, the other later, especially if the latter were created from the former, as the female was in fact created. The same can be said about companionship, should he grow tired of solitude. How much more agreeably, after all, for conviviality and conversation would two male friends live together on equal terms than man and wife? For these reasons I cannot work out what help a wife would have been made to provide the man with, if you take away the purpose of childbearing.

These are the words of Saint Augustine in the ninth chapter of his *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*. They bear careful attention beyond the initial shock they might cause. The real, historical inequality of women to men clearly implied here is, nonetheless, in Augustine's view, extrinsic to womanhood as such. Indeed, it is later presented as a punishment for the Fall in the third chapter of Genesis. Similarly, a friendly equality between man and woman as between men could never explain their partnership. The relationship of man and woman is based neither on inequality and servitude, nor on simple equality and friendship, but on something which transcends these poles and thus moves freely between them: procreation.

Thus it is that friendship and hierarchy between members of the same sex have always been more unambiguously friendship or hierarchy than when these are found between members of the opposite sex, whose relationship as male and female is defined by its procreative foundation. An army (before the days of little Jessica Lynch) or a monastery (of men or of women) or colleges (before Oberlin) have traditionally exemplified this fact: Where are men and women more clearly under authority, while remaining clearly peers, than in these places?

Our society, for ideological reasons, has chosen to judge all human relationships according to the standard of equality and inequality, even the rapport between the sexes. Thus it was only consistent that the relationship between man and woman would be freed of its original and essential foundation in procreation, a good not precisely measurable by any standard of social equality, since, in a sense, birth and family ties *are* the natural foundation of any evaluation of equity and inequity within the human race. The development of effective means of contraception and the promotion of abortion gave the impression of solidity to this putting asunder of what God hath joined together. So what could the new, nonprocreative standard of male and female be, if not the friendship that obtains between equals? (We can leave to some of our nation's Muslim allies the other possible option: servitude.)

Go back and look at David Denby's words. What do they reveal if not that he felt bound to view his marriage as primarily a friendship? Leave it to the embittered to grouse that it had to do with her being a woman! He had been formed in a milieu that views a man's expressing rage or shame at being cuckolded—not by another man, but even by a woman—as a tisk-tisk imperfection: as if his marriage was really about being a man and woman after all! Small wonder, then, that his wife might find a more satisfying friendship with a woman, one

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Fr. Hugh is prior of St. Michael's Abbey in Trabuco Canyon, California.

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with whom her equality was less ambiguous. So what is wrong with that? Is that not the case for millions of men and women whose best friends are not their spouses but members of their own sex? Nothing and yes indeed, but this friendship ended their marriage. It claimed to take its place.

The replacement of procreation with equality as the foundation of relations between the sexes has required our society to accept homosexuality as legitimate. After all, the foundation and ideal for the relations between members of the same sex is seen as morally the same as the foundation for relations between the sexes: undifferentiated equality and friendship. What is wrong with this? Let the feminist Dame Rebecca West shed some light here for the perplexed reader from her study *St. Augustine*, a horrible hatchet-job of a book but full of the finest, useful insights, as long as she is not concerned directly with her subject: "[Augustine teaches] in a sentence which with characteristic insight, puts its finger on the real offense of homosexuality, by pointing out that it brings the confusion of passion into the domain where one ought to be able to practice calmly the art of friendship."

The unhinging of the relationship between man and woman from its procreative framework has led to the sexualization of relationships which ought to remain serenely free of this momentous burden. Onan has slouched all the way to Gomorrah singing, "Get me to the church on time."

I am not so much concerned here to give a Dr. Dobson argument against "gay marriage" or even homosexual relationships in general. I am asserting a self-evident fact that such relationships, to the extent that they are sexual (if this were not the case, then there would be no issue), are, on the witness of Creation, fictitious, illusory, and, yes, perverted. In the 11th century, St. Peter Damian, in his notorious and devastatingly relevant letter 31 on clerical sodomy, the so-called *Book of Gomorrah*, made this psychologically and morally trenchant observation:

> Tell us, man, what do you seek in another male that you do not find in yourself? What difference in sex, what varied features of the body? . . . For it is the function of the natural appetite that each should seek outside himself what he cannot find within his own capacity. Therefore, if the touch of masculine flesh delights you, lay your hands upon yourself and be assured that whatever you do not find in yourself, you seek in vain in the body of another.

What should one man seek from the body of another man? Only the union of wills, expressed in speech, shared thoughts, expressions of mutual interest. Let us hear the robustly heterosexual Saint Augustine in an often mistranslated passage of his *Confessions*:

> The union of two in one: this is what is loved in friends, and so loved that a man's conscience must confess his guilt if he does not love one who loves him in return or does not love in return one who loves him, seeking nothing from his body, but the expression of good will.

The natural law requires the love of friendship between members of the same sex. Homosexual relationships, however, are inherently dishonest, in both the Latin and the English senses. They imply a foundation beyond the relationship that is not there. They outrage the simplicity of equality and—unlike the transcendent, procreative relationship of man and woman—have no alternative to friendship but submission. By this description, of course, they differ, it would seem, only aesthetically from the NPR-*New Yorker* ideal of "heterosexual" marriage, which denies its foundation. And so Mr. Denby and "Ms." Schine seethe with frustration, while striving to be amicable. Small wonder, then, that not all homosexuals support giving binding, legal status to their "marriages." Here is the great irony of the "equality of the sexes": It destroys what natural equality there truly is and denies that there is a basis in human society for the sublimation of inequality into a greater, common good. True marriage has both of these and something even greater.

What is it? The creation of Eve is about procreation, but not only according to the flesh. According to Augustine, in the same ninth chapter of *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, the ecstasy of procreative union has its archetype and final cause in the creature's ecstatic union with God, for which end, the filling up of the number of the blessed, man and woman bring forth new life:

> That ecstasy, which God cast on Adam, to put him into a deep sleep, may rightly be understood as cast upon him precisely in order that he in his mind through ecstasy become as it were a member of the angelic court, and so "enter into the sanctuary of God and understand the last things" (Psalm 73:17). Finally, on waking up full of prophecy so to say when he saw his wife brought to him he immediately burst out with what the apostle holds up to us as a great sacrament: "This is now bone out of my bone and flesh of my flesh, this shall be called woman, since she was taken out of her man: and for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and the two shall be one flesh."

Marriage was, from the beginning, the Great Sacrament of the union of God with mankind, of Christ and His Church, in which new birth there is "neither male nor female, Jew or Gentile, slave or free," but "they shall all be like the angels in heaven, neither marrying nor giving in marriage." After all, it was the Bridegroom who said, "I no longer call you servants, but friends because I have revealed to you everything I have heard from my Father." There is thus a very profound sense in which a certain supernatural equality is the standard for all relationships—that is, the capacity of man's heart for a marital union with God. This is what led David, son of Jesse, foreshadowing the love of the God Who was procreated from him, to cry out (II Samuel 1):

> The beauty of Israel is slain upon thine high places: how are the mighty fallen! . . . How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

May God grant such love to David Denby and his many modern brethren. ©

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Marriage and the Law

Time for a Divorce?

by Stephen B. Presser

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court's 4-3 ruling, in *Goodridge* v. *Department of Public Health*, that the Massachusetts constitution—if not the federal Constitution—requires the state to allow same-sex marriages has thrown nearly everyone into a good old-fashioned tizzy. The Massachusetts court somehow discovered that it was "arbitrary" and "capricious" and therefore legally impermissible to limit the legal benefits of marriage to heterosexual couples. In response, some are urging an amendment to the U.S. Constitution declaring that marriage can only occur between two people of opposite sex; some are trying to get the Massachusetts legislature to repudiate the reasoning of its court; and many more are wailing, gnashing their teeth, and decrying the low moral state into which the culture and the judiciary have fallen. All of this is understandable, but the truth is that, in the Anglo-American system, marriage has always had an uneasy relationship with secular law, and, to the extent that the Massachusetts decision reminds us of this, there might actually be something to be said in favor of the decision.

Consider the words of Sir William Blackstone, writer of the classic *Commentaries on the Common Law of England* (1765-68), the book that was second only to the Bible in circulation in early 19th-century America. Blackstone was no champion of homosexual "marriage," but he understood that the common law's relation to marriage was simply to confirm its use as a means of combining the property and personal rights of husband and wife, with control placed (albeit supervised to a limited extent) by the law in the hands of the husband. The wife was to be provided for and entitled to one-third profit from her husband's lands during her life if he predeceased her, and the law would intervene if the husband failed to perform his duties. Except for her "paraphernalia," which included her ceremonial jewels, most of her property could be disposed of by her husband, and, while the marriage endured, she was incapable of entering into contracts or even of testifying against her husband in court. This did not bother Blackstone, who essentially believed that the arrangement was in the best interests of both husband and wife—especially the latter, since "So great a favorite is the female sex of the laws of England." Even so, Blackstone regarded the aspects of marriage supervised by the secular law as not the essence of the institution. Indeed, he opens his discussion of marriage by remarking that "Our law considers marriage in no other light than as a civil contract. The Holiness of the matrimonial state is left entirely to the ecclesiastical law: the temporal courts not having jurisdiction to consider unlawful marriages as a sin, but merely as a civil inconvenience."

In colonial and early republican America, marriage was rarely regulated by the law, and the curiously named institution, unknown in England, of "common-law marriage" (whereby the law would recognize a man and a woman as husband and wife if they lived as such for an extended period of time) took hold. The consequence of this was simply to render their issue "legitimate" in the eyes of the law and to allow husband, wife, and children whatever benefits the law accorded, especially the ability to inherit property if spouse or parent died intestate. By the middle of the 19th century, however—probably because of the influence of some theorists who argued that the unit of loving Christian husband and wife was a basic building block in a good republic—the language of the law shifted to speak in terms of the contribution marriage made to morals rather than to property rights. In *Reynolds* v. *United States* (1878), the U.S. Supreme Court, in the course of a decision upholding the prohibition of polygamy, declared that

> Marriage, while from its very nature a sacred obligation, is nevertheless, in most civilized nations, a civil contract, and usually regulated by law. Upon it society may be said to be built, and out of its fruits spring social relations and social obligations and duties, with which government is necessarily required to deal.

Polygamy tended to lead in most societies to despotism, and so, the court held, it was inconsistent with the needs of America.

This period was a sort of golden age of judicial patriarchy waxing eloquent about the married state of husband and wife, how it was the natural one for women, and how it accorded with divine plans. Said Justice Bradley, in a U.S. Supreme Court case upholding Illinois's power to bar women from the practice of law: "The natural and proper timidity and delicacy which belongs to the female sex evidently unfits it for many of the occupations of civil life." "The constitution of the family organization," he went on, "which is founded in the divine ordinance, as well as in the nature of things, indicates the domestic sphere as that which properly belongs to the domain and functions of womanhood." Thus, for Bradley, "The paramount destiny and mission of woman are to fulfill the noble and benign offices of wife and mother. This is the law of the Creator. And the rules of civil society must be adopted to the general constitution of things, and cannot be based upon exceptional cases." Bradley's views, which were probably shared by a majority of men at the time, made sense in an era when even the Supreme Court could confidently declare, as it did in *Church of the Holy Trinity* v. *United States* (1892), quoting the earlier words of New York's influential Chancellor James Kent, that "The people of this State, in common with the peo-

Stephen B. Presser is the Raoul Berger Professor of Legal History at Northwestern University School of Law and the legal-affairs editor for Chronicles.

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ple of this country, profess the general doctrines of Christianity, as the rule of their faith and practice . . . We are a Christian people, and the morality of this country is deeply engrafted upon Christianity." Moreover, the Supreme Court noted in *Church of the Holy Trinity* that, "It is also said, and truly, that the Christian religion is part of the common law . . . These and other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation."

The Old Testament ostensibly leaves open the possibility of polygamy, but the New Testament appears to have been interpreted as binding on the U.S. Supreme Court (and thus the country) in its suggestion that marriage is only between one man and one woman. These days, however, one risks universal excoriation if he tries to argue that the United States is a "Christian nation," as Mississippi Gov. Kirk Fordice discovered a few years back. The story of the law in the second half of the 20th century is, in part, a repudiation of Christian concepts and their replacement by a set of notions designed to promote "self-actualization" or the maximum achievement of individual freedom—freedom from the regulation of the state and its imposition of traditional morals. *Goodrich* is simply the latest case to follow this trend.

Beginning in the 1960's, the U.S. Supreme Court found in the Establishment Clause license to bar mandatory prayer and Bible-reading in the public schools. In the name of individual freedom, the states endorsed "no-fault" divorce, so that virtually any dissatisfied party could walk away from a personally unfulfilling marriage. At about the same time, any social stigma to having children outside of wedlock began to vanish, so that, by the end of the 20th century, more than half of the children in some ethnic and racial groups were not born to married parents, and the figure for the entire society was hovering around 25 percent. The nuclear Christian family, endorsed by 19th-century law, was dying.

At the same time, the U.S. Supreme Court began to discover that there was a "right of privacy," as one notable decision put it, that emanated from penumbras somewhere around the First, Fourth, Fifth, and Ninth Amendments, and that this meant that no state could prohibit married adults from purchasing contraceptives. This was followed by the infamous *Roe* v. *Wade* (1973) decision, which extended the right to privacy to prohibit states from barring early-term abortions. This "right" was eventually expanded to prohibit all "undue burdens" on abortions at any time during pregnancy, to permit at least some partial-birth abortions, and, most recently, in *Lawrence* v. *Texas* (2002), to bar criminal penalties for consensual homosexual sodomy. Justice Scalia, in his dissent in *Lawrence*, stated that the Supreme Court "leaves on pretty shaky grounds state laws limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples." It was no surprise that *Goodrich* cited *Lawrence* in its opening paragraphs. Scalia lamented that the Supreme Court was, in his words, "largely signing on to the so-called homosexual agenda."

It might be closer to the truth, though, to say that the majority of the *Lawrence* Court had signed on to unbridled individual discretion and a refusal to allow legislators to make any moral judgments whatsoever. This seemed to be the message implied by the *Goodrich* court, when it quoted the U.S. Supreme Court's dubious language from *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey* (1992)—invoked again in the majority opinion in *Lawrence*—that "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life. Beliefs about these matters could not define the attributes of personhood were they formed under the compulsion of the state." As Notre Dame law professor Gerard V. Bradley put it in his critique of the passage, "the justices wish to be seen as affirming the right of each person to make up his own moral universe, but to affirm it without making any moral commitments of their own. As if taking the view that everybody can, or should, or should be thought to, inhabit his own world were all 'neutral' propositions." "Making up one's world," Bradley astutely notes, "is existentially impossible, no more empirically available than a unicorn. Of course, some people believe in unicorns."

The majority of the justices on the U.S. Supreme Court, and the majority of the justices on the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, then, are hunting unicorn. As columnist John Leo remarked, "The Massachusetts decision depicted marriage as an intimacy choice for individuals." Dazzled, perhaps by their visions of unicorns, the four Massachusetts justices simply lost sight of the fact that marriage is about more than simply the carnal desires or the individual dignities of two persons. As Leo explained, "Procreation and child rearing, central to a prevailing view of marriage for most of Western history, pretty much disappeared in the decision."

The unreflecting, perhaps self-deluding, embrace of unbridled individualism is bad enough, but, following the Massachusetts court's ruling, there was a bevy of howls about how it is improper for mere one-person majorities of state or federal courts to alter hundreds of years of belief, tradition, or morals by judicial fiat. Leo lamented:

> Why do judges behave this way? One reason is "landmarkism." The loudest applause from the legal academy tends to come after a far-reaching allegedly progressive decision unsupported by public opinion, and with no real basis in the U.S. Constitution or case law. No judge gets to be admired by the legal and media elites by simply following law and precedents. No glamour there.

For whatever reason, the four Massachusetts justices seemed to have taken leave of their senses. As Roger G. Wilkins wrote in *Meridian*, the Massachusetts majority had forgotten the traditional purpose of marriage: "The bearing, rearing and acculturation of children are social interests of surpassing importance." Denying what now can be achieved in the petri dish, Wilkins argued that "Procreation *requires* a coupling between a man and a woman. Here, if not in constitutional law, not all sexual relationships are equal." Refusing to bow to the Massachusetts court's reading of the social-science data, Wilkins argued that

> [T]he common experience of mankind—documented by a growing mountain of research—demonstrates that the best environment for the rearing and training of a child is within a stable marriage between the child's biological father and mother. These simple facts, as true today as they were thousands of years ago, provide more than ample grounds for the specialized treatment—and social benefits—conferred upon marital unions.

Wilkins conceded the *Goodridge* majority's view that limiting

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marriage to possibly conventional procreative partners "confers an official stamp of approval on the destructive stereotype that same-sex relationships are inherently . . . inferior to opposite-sex relationships," but he stoutly maintained that "A homosexual 'marriage' will *never* produce a child. Henceforth, however, we all must officially ignore this fact."

"Gay marriage" advocates could counter Wilkins' argument with their own studies, which claim that homosexual partners could rear adopted—or, for that matter, *cloned*—children just as well as heterosexual couples can, and we can expect such an argument to be made with increasing frequency in the future. The real question that needs to be addressed is whether the decision about the definition of marriage should be left to the courts or to the people. For four decades, conservatives have railed against justices usurping the legislative function, but this seems to have had virtually no effect in the area of sexual relations, intimate association, or the "right to privacy." As long as Senate Democrats can employ the filibuster, there will be no U.S. Supreme Court justices placed on the bench who do not sign on to the "mystery passage" view of individualism and morality.

A federal marriage amendment is still possible, of course, and it is even conceivable that, by the time you read this, the Massachusetts legislature will have authorized "civil unions" for homosexual couples, conferring all the benefits of marriage (but the name) on their arrangements, thus preserving something of tradition. The lesson of *Goodrich* and *Roe* and *Lawrence*, however, is that this country may now be embarking on a few decades in which the law will not allow governmental action to be taken in the name of traditional morality. Those who seek to preserve that morality will only be able to do it through their private associations—their churches, their families, and their independent schools. The nature of the uneasy compromise is suggested by the fact that the same Supreme Court that declared that consensual homosexual acts could not be punished as a crime did recently protect the purported First Amendment "right of association" of the Boy Scouts of America to exclude practicing homosexuals from Scout leadership. This "right of association" is an extratextual creation, something like the "right of privacy," but the Court has been just as firmly committed to it over the same decades.

No power on earth seems capable of restraining our judges, unless it is the force of elite public opinion. That opinion still pays lip service, at least, to the free exercise of religion (expressly guaranteed by the Constitution) and to the importance of private property and private association. Perhaps it is time to go back to the view that marriages and families and the sacred bonds that unite husbands, wives, and children can best flourish in a relationship severed from the state, one that does not depend on a capricious judiciary or political process. There has been no consistent treatment of marriage over time. Perhaps it is wrong to use the government to dictate the details of this precious institution, and perhaps marriage needs to return to the Church. Cultures evolve, and not always for the better. American law follows cultural trends, but American law has wisely (at least up until now) sought to permit a maximum of individual freedom to associate not only for economic ends but for spiritual ones. The Court's articulation of myopic individualism, for the time being, is balanced by its understanding that the most important individual right is to gather in association. Taking advantage of that understanding may be the best thing that we can do for marriage. ◁C

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Homosexuality, In the Cards

Hating Ourselves

by Virginia Deane Abernethy

Homosexuality is either genetically or environmentally determined. Environmental influences are either intrauterine or postnatal. Behold the universe of possibilities!

Sexual orientation probably results from the interaction of environment and genetic predisposition, but science, so far, explains only a little. Voluntarily choosing homosexuality cannot be discounted, although the more deeply embedded in genetics or early experience homosexuality is, the less voluntary it is likely to be.

A related characteristic, sex, is equally mysterious. The sex ratio at birth, for example, sometimes changes in response to environmental conditions. Severe drought results in Australian aborigines who still live in their traditional surroundings having *more girls* than boys. Similarly, according to Ralph Catalano of the University of California, Berkeley, the dissolution of the communist grip on East Germany (and the ensuing severe economic dislocation in 1991) was followed by births of *more girls* than boys. These findings make it appear that male embryos are more vulnerable to a harsh intrauterine environment. If adversity differentially impedes male development, might it account for some tendency toward male homosexuality?

Very harsh postnatal conditions may also select for homosexuality. If, for example, rearing children is fraught with great difficulties, the presence of nonreproducing adults may enhance young relatives' survival and success enough to compensate the nonmarrying aunts and uncles for forgoing direct descendants of their own. Concentrating all resources on fewer children sometimes enhances the reproductive success of the extended family, thus increasing—in the terminology of sociobiology—"inclusive fitness."

If homosexuality is not all in the genes, we may speculate on which current conditions combine to make homosexuality more visible and probably more prevalent. Among whites, might low morale and downward mobility account for *some* homosexuality?

Admittedly, schools indoctrinate the young in homosexual lifestyles, cities and foundations penalize the Boy Scouts of America for refusal to entrust boys to homosexual troop leaders, and the military is ambivalent about sexuality. Efforts to subvert the nation's young include teaching that white Americans are guilty of exploiting everyone else and that their vast achievements are a chimera.

A confident people would resist such an attack on their culture and power. The attack against European-Americans succeeds because we allow it, giving every sign of being a depressed and demoralized people. Homosexuality could be addressed if demoralization were even a fraction of the cause.

Certain demographic pressures undermine confidence. Working their way through the economy and political system, demographic changes have steadily undercut the middle class, while ethnic diversity is celebrated for its own sake, and traditional culture is scorned—all leading to a confused state of mind and country.

Principal changes in U.S. demography stem from the 1965 immigration law, which substituted the principle of "family reunification" for quotas based on country of origin. In its wake, not only sheer numbers but the source of immigrants changed. From approximately 250,000 mostly European newcomers annually, today's green-card and work-visa immigrants approach 1.5 million. Illegal immigration adds an additional one-half to three-quarter million annually. The majority of newcomers are "minorities."

Both the numbers of nonassimilated newcomers and their effect on the economy create stress. Rapid growth in the workforce—if not matched by enough new capital both to create jobs and to maintain the ratio of capital invested per job—results in a combination of lower-paid jobs, worse working conditions, and fewer benefits. Harvard professor George Borjas estimates that, in 2002, immigration depressed the wages of native workers by 4.9 percent, or about $2,600 per year per worker. Borjas estimates that each ten-percent increase in immigrant workers depresses the wage of native-born Americans by an additional 3.5 percent. Applying Borjas' methodology to the latest government statistics, Edwin Rubenstein calculates that the total annual-income loss from immigration suffered by native-born workers is $302.9 billion. That loss increases in lock-step with the size of the immigrant labor force.

The erosion of the average native-born American's real income has been accelerating since 1965. A study entitled "Divergent Paths" (released in 2003 by the Russell Sage Foundation) compares the wage growth and job security of young white males entering the labor force in the 1960's with that of similar men who began working in the late 1970's and early 80's. The study documents a decline in economic prospects that its authors expect to be permanent and which has hollowed out the middle class.

Fierce competition for jobs began to weigh on young Americans after approximately 1970. For the first time in a generation, entrants into the labor market encountered rapidly growing numbers from their own ranks—the baby boomers—as well as women and immigrants. Little by little, job-seekers began to surpass the net number of new, good jobs. Where a single income had afforded a rising standard of living for the average family, two incomes soon became a near necessity. Most

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Virginia Deane Abernethy is the author of Population Politics *(reprinted in 1999). Citations for the data from the 1970's may be found in her book,* Population Pressure and Cultural Adjustment *(1979).*

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women lost the opportunity to choose full-time homemaking. The burden of supporting a family began to loom large.

Hourly labor endured the earliest effects of saturation in the labor-market, but professionals in technical fields where fluent English is not required have also suffered. Between 1968 and 1995, engineers with ten years' experience were hit with a 13-percent decline in wages (measured in constant dollars), whereupon demographer Michael Teitelbaum declared the obvious: The problem was too many engineers for too few jobs.

In 1996, Herbert Stein, former chairman of the president's Council of Economic Advisers, observed that "the risk of becoming unemployed has now spread to people who did not expect to have that risk." Even when—for the first time in many years—unemployment dipped below five percent in 1997 and briefly reached four percent in 2000, some observers suggested that fewer than half of Americans were as financially secure as they had been some decades earlier.

Convince men and women to take pride in their past and future, in their culture and country, and they will strive for its survival.

Phyllis Schlafly attributes much of the increasing unemployment among American engineers and information-technology specialists (computer programmers) to special visa programs. Workers enter the United States under H-1B (limited in number) and unlimited L-1 visas. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics counted 384,191 foreigners who held H-1B visas and 328,480 with L-1 visas in 2001. These numbers exclude visitors who have had visas extended for a three-year period or who work in educational institutions.

At least 890,000 H-1B visa-holders are in the United States at any time. Visas expire if an H-1B worker loses his job; prosecution of those who overstay their visa (who become illegal aliens after the visa expires) is almost nonexistent.

Economic growth must be substantial to overcome the explosion of the workforce caused by this flood of immigrants. During the 1990's, more than 13 million net new immigrants arrived in the United States. Andrew Sum and his colleagues at the Center for Labor Market Studies of Northeastern University write that "New foreign immigrants contributed nearly one-half of the growth in the nation's civilian labor force." (*Labor force* is defined as those of working age either employed or looking for work.)

Recession barely slows immigration. The Center for Immigration Studies reports that the "number of foreign-born adults (legal and illegal) holding a job has grown by 1.7 million since 2000, while among natives the number working actually fell by 800,000." Andrew Sum and his coinvestigators add, "All of the decline in net employment over the 2000-2002 period was borne by native-born workers."

American unemployment—reported in September 2003 by Martin Weiss in the *Safe Money Newsletter*—is 12.8 percent of the labor force, if we count underemployed part-timers as well as the unemployed. The demand for new jobs is immense.

Men face the fiercest job competition, because 70 percent of working-age immigrants are male. In fact, eight of ten male workers joining the labor force between 1990 and 2000 were newly arrived immigrants. Of the two million or so immigrants arriving annually, approximately three quarters are working age.

Thus, mass immigration is a major lever on the job market. Without changes in immigration law and enforcement, it will rise even as good manufacturing and technical jobs go overseas. Young Americans and established immigrants will not enjoy the economic opportunities created by their own country until immigration stops. When it does, America's young men and women will be somewhat buffered from Third World overpopulation.

Family formation is sensitive to economic conditions. Marriage requires decision and commitment. Good career paths make traditional marital relationships attractive and accessible, while deteriorating circumstances—wealth, income, security, and prospects for advancement—make people cautious. Bleak outlooks restrain most people from taking on responsibilities. Young people without jobs, or with dead-end jobs below their expectations, often do not marry and try, above all, to avoid becoming parents.

The young in a generation who have grown accustomed to lowering expectations and new cultural forms are increasingly likely to remain economically dependent on their parents. The 30-year depression in the labor market and debt that grows in lockstep with our consumer culture discourage both marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood. Postponed commitments evolve into singles lifestyles.

A singles lifestyle is the default option in life, "chosen" through inaction and the passage of time. Meager chances for forming a traditional family increase the attractiveness of "alternative" lifestyles. Thus, some young people may try out, or at least become open to, homosexuality, a variant of the singles culture.

If part of the prevalence and visibility of homosexual behavior is the result of choice, then a possible swing factor is the perceived ease of supporting a traditional family. Eventually, the culture bows to multiple *fait accomplis* and recognizes new "styles" of relationships.

In fact, declining economic prospects coincided quite remarkably with the higher visibility—and possibly the prevalence—of homosexuality. In September 1971, a Minneapolis judge granted one homosexual the right to adopt another. In 1974, the American Psychiatric Association voted to rescind its classification of homosexuality as an illness. On the political front, tax reform in 1973 reduced (and ultimately reversed) the married-unmarried tax-rate differential that had amounted to a penalty on the unmarried. Increasingly, homosexuals felt free from the need to marry.

Antiprocreative lifestyles and choices extended well beyond overt homosexuality. On March 22, 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Massachusetts' *Baird* decision, which had restricted heterosexual couples' right to contraception. On January 22, 1973, the Court removed legal obstacles to abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy in *Roe* v. *Wade*. Women increasingly asserted their independence from traditional

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household and maternal roles. The feminist "revolution" was so powerful that women who chose not to work outside the home reported social disapproval, even ostracism. Discussion of the right to physician-assisted suicide also surfaced in this era. And, in 1972, California reported that the teenage suicide rate was the highest in its history.

These antifamily, antilife developments emerged alongside a dawning sense that overpopulation could become a problem for America. The first Earth Day observance, sponsored in 1972 by Sen. Gaylord Nelson, called for both environmental protection *and* stabilization of population size. (Ironically, population effects are often cyclical. Shrinkage in the workforce raises wages, so the working people who benefit generally increase their likelihood of marrying and reproducing, and the next generation is larger.)

Lasting improvement in economic prospects might raise morale and bolster appreciation of country and culture—especially if we recognize that our traditional culture is in a fight for survival, a threat compounded by mass immigration and low birthrates among the native-born. Procreation is often part of a serious defense. Palestinian women, having few options, fight for land with the highest fertility rate in any Muslim country.

Those who have opted out of traditional family lifestyles might be awakened from passivity—even from a sense of futility and nihilism—if white America were to reject such debilitating trends as the role assigned to whites by liberal guilt. As Shelby Steele writes in the *Wall Street Journal* ("Yo, Howard," September 13, 2003), "Racial identity is simply forbidden to whites in America and across the entire Western world. . . . [R]acial pride in whites constitutes a grave evil. Say 'I'm white and I'm proud' and you are a Nazi."

Only a black can sing that particular tune, a fact that captures the depth of white intimidation. Rubbing salt into the wound, Steele's piece continues: "No group in recent history has more aggressively seized power in the name of its racial superiority than Western whites. This race illustrated for all time—through colonialism, slavery, white racism, Nazism—the extraordinary human evil."

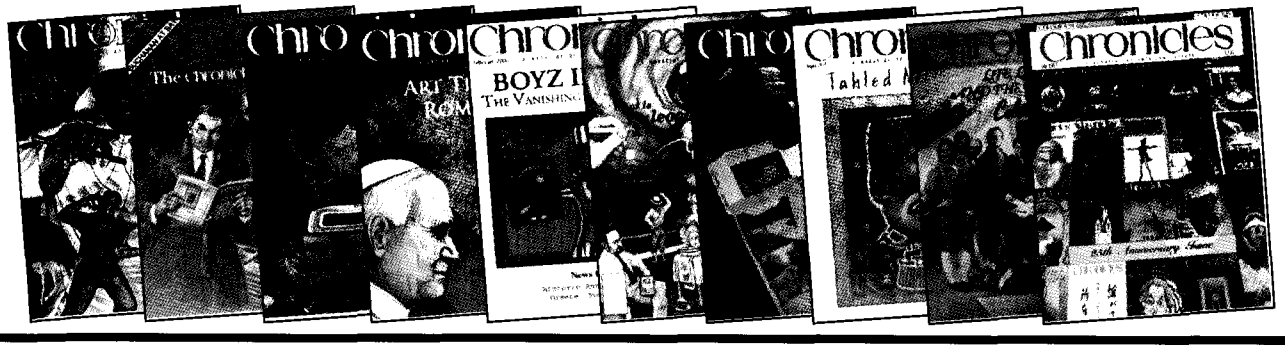
If white intimidation were not proved by the appearance of Steele's diatribe in the mainstream press, the failure to counter his attack should do so. A more self-confident press would object, as does columnist Samuel Francis, that Steele's "nakedly anti-white claim that whites illustrate for all time an 'extraordinary human evil' is not only flapdoodle . . . but a little gob of racial spit."

Intimidated European America can rise again—but not easily. Choosing to defend our ethnic tradition means overcoming decades of education that elevate victimhood and denigrate European-American culture and white males—perennially portrayed as insensitive exploiters. The contrary image—European-American culture as a noble tradition worth preserving—could become a beacon for all, including those for whom heterosexual or homosexual preference is closely balanced.

Restoration of economic prospects to a level where more children can be satisfactorily and successfully reared could result in marriage and procreation, which, on one level, are forms of self-affirmation. Familial values affirm cultural values.

We need, therefore, not to renounce a particular sexual orientation but to affirm our traditional society, which will drive our determination to protect American jobs, demand an end to mass immigration, and turn economic opportunity to the service of traditional family formation. The return of conditions that encourage the young to marry and reproduce—and might facilitate the retreat of optional homosexuality—can come only through a concerted effort on the part of many Americans.

Giving way to the forces arrayed against European-American culture is surrender. Convince men and women to take pride in their past and future, in their culture and country, and they will strive for its survival. ©



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The Kindness of Strangers

by James O. Tate

"I have always depended on the kindness of strangers."
—Blanche DuBois, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

What We Lost
by Dale Peck
New York: Houghton Mifflin;
229 pp., $23.00

What Becomes of the Brokenhearted
by E. Lynn Harris
New York: Doubleday; 288 pp., $22.95

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Sometimes, enlightenment, like confusion, can come from an unexpected source. Take the comedian, George Carlin, for example. I think that his broadcasting of dirty words is a bit less than profound, as is his hostility toward most civilized conventions; some years ago, however, he did say something brilliant, which I have never forgotten. He indicated that what is wrong with our country is that the institutions are incorrectly or misleadingly named. He offered "Bud's Medical Center" and "The Presbyterian Memorial Bar & Grill" as examples of rectified labeling, and I think his insight must be applauded.

I wonder if we could extend the Carlin principle. Perhaps we should retire the term "the border" in favor of "the sieve." "The border" would then become a useful term in the kitchen, as in the following example: "Would you please put those greens in the border and run some water through them?" The uniformed personnel of the rebadged Sieve Patrol could then resume their duties.

Speaking of misleading expressions, I was reading recently of the advocacy of "gay marriage" by David Brooks and William Safire and thought first that there had been some kind of mistake. But what kind of mistake? The term itself is some sort of oxymoron, and I am glad I could work the word *moron* in here somehow. The Carlin principle would suggest that, if the word *marriage* is used to sanction homosexual relations, as has already been done in the wedding announcements of the *New York Times*, then some other phrase should be substituted for a heterosexual commitment. I suggest the following usage: "Yes, I take my shack-job with tax breaks and visitation rights very seriously." OK, I admit that "shack-job with tax breaks and visitation rights" is long and clumsy—the thing needs work.

H. Ward Stereff

Perhaps it is the expression "neoconservative" that is willfully misleading. Does this term have no relation at all to what it ostensibly denotes? Besides, as William Safire is a word maven, he must have some respect for the dictionary, for the plain meaning of words, surely? Manifest nonsense suggested then another possibility. I was indeed reading the *New York Times*, not the *Village Voice*. I was not dreaming or falling down a rabbit hole. Brooks and Safire were going to get married as a *ménage à deux*, because they could never be satisfied emotionally with a mere shack-up. Possibly—or maybe the two of them were planning to become, combined with the *Zeitgeist*, as a newly mysterious and blasphemous trinity, one Episcopal bishop? No? Yes? Maybe?

Wait a minute, I said to myself. Cool it with the lurid speculation. Brooks and Safire are basically political commentators who have columns in a "newspaper of record" that has become increasingly an instrument of advocacy for "gay rights." When the politics of "gay rights" are identified, then we will understand the anomalous position of Brooks and Safire. It is a political position directly related to money and power, and, for that reason, it is masked as something else, a humane concern for others. Do not assume that, because Brooks and Safire take the same position that homosexual activists do, they are homosexual activists themselves, even though such an assumption would be logically justifiable. After all, Brooks and Safire do not have any trouble with the words *money* and *power*, any more than they do with words like *invasion* and *bombing*. They actually know what these words mean without any help from lexicographers. No, it is the hitherto familiar word *marriage* that has caused such a spot of bother.

Now suppose that we hold the baffling, problematic, and discriminatory word *marriage* in abeyance for a while. After all, the "problem" of "gay marriage" does not exist in a vacuum. If we look elsewhere, we will find other and relat-

Contributing editor James O. Tate teaches English at Dowling College on Long Island.

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ed anomalies or examples of "semantic drift." I do not mean mere lexical change here—I am referring to that disingenuous contrivance that marks not only the force of ideology as it distorts reality, but, even more tellingly, the will to deceive. I am thinking of the sartorial cues recently affected by that unblinking mannequin, "General" Wesley K. Clark—a man who has, in his life, sniffed a lot more toner from Xerox machines than he has cordite fumes from gunfire. Exchanging his blue suits for argyle sweaters, the intrepid general has sought to close the "gender gap." General Clark declared on January 8, "I think there's an impression [among women, he means] that the armed forces is a male-dominated, hierarchical, authoritarian institution. And I think they have to get to know me." We might ask why a general would not know the definition of *army* and why one who affects a high military rank even in civilian life would have any "problem" with hierarchy, particularly since rank is directly tied to salary. We might indeed reflect that, if the armed services are not male-dominated, hierarchical, and authoritarian, then these services would be both dangerous and ineffective. Clark's bizarre statement may explain why Bill and Hillary Clinton have promoted Clark's candidacy, since the first major action of the first Clinton administration was to intervene about the policy concerning homosexuals in the military. Only a mind-set that regards national defense as a "civil-rights wedge" and night carrier landings (Eek! Crash! Splash!) as an opportunity for feminist demonstrations of equality could possibly entertain such an inversion, virtually schizophrenic in its delusions. If the former supreme commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization does not know the denotation of the word *army* or of the phrase *Armed Forces*, or of the organization and ethos of soldiers as they have been known at least since the days of Louis XIV, then no wonder the word *marriage* is such a conundrum. We might remember, too, that this particular NATO commander thought that the obscure phrase *North Atlantic* referred to Southeastern Europe or Adriatic, and that the perplexing word *treaty* had much to do with the familiar bombing so dear to the schemes of William Safire. Perhaps a clarifying stay at the Betty Ford Clinic could resolve some of the general's cognitive difficulties, but I do not really believe that Wesley Clark has a substance-abuse problem. I think he simply demonstrates what must happen when the corruption of language and logic by demented factions and identity groups is brought to bear upon public-policy discussions. The result is the higher nonsense that is the language of power in our country today, in which a general talks like Andrea Dworkin and is afraid to wear formal clothes because they are just too butch for soccer-mom focus groups. A general has to prove that he is a wimp who knows nothing about the Armed Forces in order to troll for votes from people that he obviously holds in contempt anyway. Yes, we are in the neighborhood of "homosexual marriage," the zone of nonsense, after all.

Now, in the zone of nonsense or "Neo-World," as we may call it, we must expect grotesque formulations in which one world of discourse contaminates another to bizarre effect. There have been many absurd announcements and releases from the Pentagon and the White House that have justified the bombing of Afghanistan and the invasion of Iraq on the grounds of feminist theory, which is not only left-wing agitprop for a seemingly right-wing action but a dangerously revealing concession that the present violence is a war on Islam, after all.

How absurd the military can be when it is directed by fanatics who are blinded by an obsession with social engineering! Back in 1999, Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig called the submarine segment of his own service a "white male preserve." He seemed to be taking cues from Mary J. Wamsley, chairman of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, and pushed for the redesign of the Navy's new class of missile submarines so that women could serve in such restricted space. The cost of integrating sleeping space was estimated at $300,000 a bunk. "A recent Navy report noted that fewer women would share one bathroom, forcing more men to share the other and raising questions of equality." If that is what *equality* means, then there is something to learn about the tyranny of abstractions and false ideals. But what about the pressing issue of equal facilities in missile submarines for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons? Let's get our priorities straight!

In Neo-World, the "gay"-rights cause must be a justification of violence as well. A Log Cabin Republican was recently and prominently quoted as declaring, "The repressive regime in Iraq was so heinous towards gay rights." We will soon hear more about "gay marriage," and then we will hear about "gay marriage" in the Armed Forces. This will be justified by the usual logic and the additional argument that such an arrangement will promote the retention of the best people in uniform. Why should anyone object, when there has been so little objection to the arming of women in a mercenary army, many of whose soldiers are not yet American citizens? Besides, I think "gay marriage" in the military could reduce the cost of bunk space in missile submarines. "Gay marriage" could also be a positive value in our nation's prisons. We have got to learn to be creative and think outside the box.

The support that "gay marriage" has received from the political, entertainment, educational, and corporate establishments is proof that it has arrived. Recently, in New Jersey, a radical new marriage law was passed with no opposition at all. This revolution shows three things, I believe. The first is that almost no one in America has been undamaged mentally by the confusion that has resulted from the mixing of various civil-rights discourses, from the movement for equal rights for blacks to the movement for women's rights to the movement for "gay" rights. At the end of the day, disregarding the merits of any particular cause, we are simply unable to think clearly any more. We cannot distinguish between equality before the law as a principle and "equality" as a destructive and tyrannical abstraction that has become a pretext for the trashing of the culture and values that have formerly distinguished our heritage. To see the definition of *marriage* as a problem to be effaced by totalitarian obfuscation, and marriage itself as discriminatory, is to have abandoned mind and memory altogether. Brooks and Safire have declared for "gay marriage" as the inevitable result of turbocapitalist market-spinning. Marx declared that capitalism was the most revolutionary phenomenon in history, and Neo-World is basically Marxist. Don't we always need newly defined groups to manipulate and to make the beneficiaries of preposterous laws?

Another conclusion that we can draw from the affirmation of "gay marriage" is that, besides being deceptive, manipulative, and related to demographic calculations and financial considerations, the "gay marriage" bandwagon is more a sign of weakness than of strength. In the future, the "gay marriage" phenomenon

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will reveal the splits in the "gay community." There will naturally be, as there have been in the past, more lesbian "Boston marriages" than stable two-man relationships. There are individual exceptions, of course, but "cruising" and anonymous drug-boosted orgies are not the stuff of fidelity. There is not much point in telling pious lies about the matter. Syphilis is making a big comeback in New York, along with other sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV. There was a time when the "gay community" was more honest. There was, for instance, one celebrated graffito at the wharf in Cherry Grove back in the early 80's. As the crisis mounted, one poet in particular had no intention of settling down: "In your butt / He popped his nuts / Now life fades / You've got AIDS / Burma Shave." It was whistling in the dark, but at least it was whistling, not whining. The documentary film *The Gift* (2003) shows that HIV infection is sometimes deliberately sought by "bug-chasers," who attend ritualized initiations to the virus or gift at "conversion parties." The gnostic/religious ring of such perversity is worthy of remark.

There is a tradition, perhaps even an heroic tradition, of homosexual response to an embattled, alienated position and of the creation of art. Walt Whitman denied he was a homosexual, though, in his work, he implied, or more than implied, that he was. In "Respondez!" a coarse early effort that he later revised, he did not pull his punches.

> Let marriage slip down among
> fools, and be for none but fools!
> Let men among themselves talk
> and think forever obscenely of
> women! And let women among
> themselves talk and think ob-
> scenely of men!

Oscar Wilde did not create as much art as he pretended to, but *Salome*, bristling with a tension that is now hardly a memory, has the imagination of the Other. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* has something going for it, too, though not as much as "The Decay of Lying." Wilde was married, had two children, and lost his family in self-inflicted calamity and divorce. It is hard to think of Dorian Gray wanting anything as suburban as marriage, or of Marcel Proust bothering about such a banal intrusion on his precious writing time and his exquisite self-absorption. Andre Gide was married—to a woman. E.M. Forster, who wrote much to show the necessity of imagination in sustaining civilization, was not. The varied brilliance and folly of such people seems a world removed from today's flat cultural scene. Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote, who could really write, seem to be giants when we consider them against today's artless and witless crowd.

Never mind the obtuse television shows, the bad art exhibits, the ugly music, the lack of discipline and talent—what about writing and literary culture? David Leavitt having been rendered *hors de combat* by that embarrassing plagiarism scandal, we will just skip right past him, with only an admonition not to try to put one past those pesky lawyers ever again! So, moving right along: The hostile reviews that Dale Peck has brought together in *Hatchet Job* have put the burden on him to produce fiction of a quality that might justify his ire, but a glance at *What We Lost* (2003) suggests that Dale has problems as well as tendencies. What we lost is nothing if we have not read Dale Peck, but what we lost if we bought *What We Lost* was 23 smackers. He has no perceivable gift as a writer and, in fact, makes elementary errors all the time. His novel is inert, boring, and incompetent. His reviews seem to be nothing but self-serving rants. He particularly resents James Joyce, apparently because that writer tried to create new "langwedge" that is just so terribly challenging and difficult. I tried to reach Jimmy Joyce about all this, but he is absolutely buried in Zurich, and I could not get through to him.

Well, clutch my pearls! I almost forgot about that really hot novelist, E. Lynn Harris, and his new autobiography, *What Becomes of the Brokenhearted* (2003). Sometimes E. Lynn can write, and he can build a scene and reach for the right word, the striking and simple thing. E. Lynn's stock in trade, however, is to pick at the emotions of his clientele, exploiting clichés about race, sex, and orientation. A black writer mostly for sentimental white women, E. Lynn Harris has piled up the moolah with such novels as *Abide With Me* and *A Love of My Own*. There is a long tradition of erotic kitsch in American literature, and E. Lynn will take his place with Jacqueline Susann, Sidney Sheldon, and other purveyors of soap. E. Lynn has proved that a homosexual can be just as mediocre as any straight, but that does not make his memoir much better than his gushy fiction.

My survey has neglected such campy people as filmmaker John Waters and poet Edward Field, whose work I have sometimes enjoyed. The severity and icy perversity of a little masterpiece of S&M such as *The Real Thing* by William Carney (1968) seems remote now, so I think that I must draw the third conclusion about the sanction of sodomy by Neo-World and the powers that be. I sense a disguised religious motive in the intrusion upon the realm of religion, and particularly in the denial of that encroachment. We are talking about civil, not religious, unions, they say. I say, however, that the image of marriage is a profound cultural trope that cannot be twisted without immense damage, and it is just this damage that making sodomy a sacrament is designed to inflict. In the Old Testament, the erotically charged Song of Songs has long since been allegorized as a song about God's love for His people. The Christians interpreted it in parallel, as a poem about the love of Christ for His Church. The image of cosmic marriage is fundamental or foundational to Judaism and Christianity, and that is the reason for the movement to replace this trope with the image of cosmic sodomy. The homosexual hatred of the Bible and of religious tradition does not square with today's mealy-mouthed pseudospirituality, the cant of sinners who do not want to be saved but to be affirmed—to be justified without penitence. "Cheap grace" has no place either on the Day of Atonement or in another theology of atonement; sodomy is not marriage nor the consummation thereof; and neither is Christ the Bridegroom a sketch by Tom of Finland. The sacralization of sodomy is more than willful leveling: It is knowing blasphemy. Such is the determination of "faith-based" leadership in this "religious nation," and such is the explicit logic of "equality": The only fair distinction is none, with affirmative action for sodomy. The Jacobins and the Marquis de Sade and Jean Genet were more honest in their satanism than the proper little patriots of Neo-World; and they were better writers than the word-processors who now affect to inherit the tradition of inversion. c

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The Unbearable Illegitimacy of American Law

by Stephen B. Presser

Law, Pragmatism, and Democracy
by Richard A. Posner
Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 416 pp., $35.00

American Law in the Twentieth Century
by Lawrence M. Friedman
New Haven: Yale University Press; 722 pp., $35.00

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For some time now, American law and lawyers have had a legitimacy problem. Most Americans must wonder how it is that unelected federal judges have the power to declare that no state government can punish consensual homosexual relations, prohibit abortion, or permit prayer in the schools (to mention just a few of the striking things the federal courts have done in the past few decades). Nothing in the Constitution or federal law clearly requires these holdings, and all of the laws struck down by federal courts were well-established legal practices for generations. From at least as early as 1786, some Americans have wondered whether we really need so many lawyers. In that year, Benjamin Austin, a Boston merchant who thought American lawyers woefully ignorant of commercial needs, declared that they were not a necessary "order" in a republic; yet, two centuries later, we had approximately one million members of that order (giving us, probably, a higher percentage of lawyers *per capita* than any other nation in history).

Two interesting volumes address these and other puzzles of our current legal establishment. In *Law, Pragmatism, and Democracy*, the Hon. Richard Posner (U.S. circuit judge for the Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit), easily the most prolific federal judge who ever lived (he has published more than 40 books), explains why he believes it makes sense to give judges wide-ranging discretion, unrestrained by many legal niceties. Prof. Lawrence Friedman, the Marion Rice Kirkwood Professor of Law at Stanford and the country's preeminent legal historian, argues in *American Law in the Twentieth Century* that our legal system is simply a reflection of our culture. Both books are engagingly well written, both authors are breathtakingly knowledgeable—and neither seems particularly disturbed by the fact that law, as the courts now interpret it, is not what it once was. It used to be the proud boast of the Framers (John Adams in particular) that ours was a government of laws, not men—meaning that the law, instead of representing arbitrary preference, contained timeless values; that law was a source and a protector of morality; and that the law's moral base rested on a religious foundation. Not any more, apparently.

Richard Posner, in this thoughtful, if ultimately alarming, work, takes the position that American law is not now and probably never was as deep as some claimed. He makes his principal mission "simply to make the case for contemporary American democracy." This "democracy," in his view, requires a legal system that is not committed to anything other than preserving a plurality of options; judging in such a system, Posner argues, involves a pragmatic, case-by-case approach that rejects "conceptualisms" such as "moral, legal, and political theory when offered to guide legal and other official decisionmaking." Posner's America is a place featuring "Certain characteristics . . . first noted in a systematic way by Tocqueville but already epitomized in the career and attitudes of Benjamin Franklin—primarily the commercial values that have, since almost the beginning, largely defined American society." These values, he believes,

> discourage reflection and abstract thought, neither of which has a commercial payoff, and encourage the bracketing of deep issues because they tend to disrupt and even poison commercial relations among strangers.

What American judges ought to try to do, and what the best of them (such as Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., and John Marshall, Posner's avatars in this volume) did, is to eschew anything other than a pragmatic approach that allows them to "accept the irreducible plurality of goals and preferences within a morally heterogeneous society such as that of the United States, and proceed from there." Posner believes (as Holmes did) that the job of judges is essentially legislative, although, like Holmes, he is prepared to defer to executives or legislatures when it makes pragmatic sense to do so in the effort to preserve and further American pluralism. Posner is even willing to concede that the idea of the rule of law is useful—in moderation. "The formalist attributes encompassed by the concept of the rule of law," he concedes, "have great social value, but in present circumstances only as elements of an overall approach to law that is pragmatic."

It is easy (and tempting) to suggest that all of this amounts to an elaborate justification for Posner's own style of judging, which can often seem idiosyncratic, if not arbitrary, to readers of his books as well as to litigants who appear before him. What Posner attributes to "American democracy"—and to American society—is a desire for the kind of individual liberty and unwillingness to promulgate a creed that lies behind so many federal-court decisions that have rejected state legislation and state practices based on religious or moral notions. This may seem like an elevation of the judge's personal preference over the established law (and it is), but Posner does manage tolerably well to argue that what he does has been done by many other American judges. He justifies and supports this approach through his embrace of the principles of Hans Kelson's positivism, Joseph Schumpeter's concept of "elite democracy" (in which elites compete for the favor of the people), and the rejection of the naive "deliberative democracy" (in which public policy is hashed out through extended discussion) of John Dewey and the "rule of law"-based formalism of Friedrich Hayek.

Posner may really believe that our law has no interest for "deep thinkers." Paradoxically, however, his book clarifies what these philosophers were up to; while American lawyers, whom Posner properly understands as almost completely unreflective, might gain much from reading this and other studies of Kelson, Schumpeter, Dewey, and Hayek—and many other minor figures in law and philosophy—if only to secure some idea of what is now missing from our juridical thought.

Like Posner, Lawrence Friedman is a gifted prose swordsman. The American public, he tells us, "by and large, is inert—busy with its own affairs or, after the dawn of the glorious age of television, sitting with a six-pack in front of the flickering screen." Condemning "race preju-

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dice" on the West Coast in the late 1800's and early 1900's, he writes that "It carried with it strong overtones of economic rivalry, sexual paranoia, and the usual vague fears of dark, unmentionable evils that might destroy (as it were) America's precious bodily fluids." Of the WPA artists, Friedman says that, "In all honesty, most of them fall pretty far short of the standards set, say, for Florence or Siena in the days of the Medicis." He describes William Howard Taft as "a strong, conservative force on the Court, as well as by far the fattest person ever to serve as Chief Justice." Rather than restricting himself to a few judicial decisions and jurists as Posner does, Friedman takes for his subject the whole sweep of 20th-century law. Posner is good reading for legal scholars and a few sophisticated lawyers, but Friedman can profitably be tackled and enjoyed by anyone curious about our current legal conundrums.

To a certain extent, Friedman's theme is the same as Posner's: The genius of American law is its pluralism, or what Friedman occasionally calls "plural equality." The result of current law and culture, Friedman argues, is to produce "a different America, a more plural America [than we had in the 19th century], an America made up of a rainbow of cultures and colors and norms." Friedman covers nearly every topic encountered in three years of law study and a decade or two at the bar, including (but not limited to) contracts, civil procedure, torts, property, corporations, constitutional law, criminal law, landlord-tenant law, environmental law, evidence, trial practice, federal jurisdiction, administrative law, labor law, bankruptcy, banking, insurance, antitrust, local-government law, food-and-drug law, family law, international public and private law, immigration law, tax law, and the law of securities regulation. His main themes are the rise of the welfare-regulatory state; the rise of courts as policy-makers; the shift of power to the federal government; and the "law explosion" (the current tendency to litigate and regulate everything). If Posner tends toward the arcane, Friedman has a gift for simplifying esoteric doctrine and demonstrating how virtually all 20th-century developments can be understood simply as reflections of trends in American culture. Friedman has no need of Kelson, Schumpeter, Dewey, or Hayek: Usually, he regards the law as something more or less devoid of content, except insofar as it mirrors trends in the broader society.

And here, really, is Friedman's argument: There is little to differentiate American life and law. For him, the latter simply reflects the former. If the federal courts have rewritten state and federal law, that is because this is what Americans want. "The main theme of this book," he tells us, "is that law is a product of society." As he puts it in an arresting mixed metaphor, "[Legal and constitutional] doctrines do not grow on trees; they feed on the meat and drink of social approval."

Thus, Friedman explains America's current litigiousness and obsession with "rights" by observing that "the essence of late-twentieth-century culture" was "a general right to know, to choose, to act independent of authority." "[I]n the end," he tells us, "one has to fall back on a strain in American legal culture which supports (for some of us, at least) the idea of suing the daylights out of those we blame for our misfortunes." If we have much more law and many more lawyers than we used to, and if the modern legal system seems unwieldy, untraditional, and incoherent, that is because, in Professor Friedman's late-20th-century America,

> There is no such thing as objective truth. There is white truth and black truth and Asian truth and Hispanic truth. There is male truth and female truth. Probably there is young truth and old truth, and rich truth and poor truth, too.

But is Friedman's truth "true"? Is American law really nothing but what a few elite judges think the American public needs? Is it a reflection of "interest group" plurality, the desire for "individual fulfillment," personal satisfaction, and personal growth or "the master change in the general culture in the twentieth century: the triumph of the individual, the exaltation of the self," as Friedman maintains? Is there no hope for a return to what law once was?

The profession of law once was a calling, in the practice of which one did not work simply to further the needs of individual selfish clients or interest groups; and a lawyer—an "officer of the court"—understood his responsibility to maintain and pass on the traditional mores of the community. A lawyer was not a mere technician or even a sophisticated social scientist, employing economic models to further the needs of a market economy. A lawyer was a man of letters who understood that American law was a reminder to Americans that there are higher goods than self-gratification; that the law and the Constitution were intended to preserve the assumption that, as American republicans, we had duties to one another, to our country, and to God; in short, that ours was to be a Christian republic and a light unto the nations. Posner leaves room for some people (and maybe even a few judges) to continue to believe that; Professor Friedman, however, provides none at all. Rather, he states explicitly his belief that "There is, to be honest, no way to turn back the clock."

And yet, not all change in American law has proved permanent. We have trimmed back the frankly redistributive and confiscatory taxes of the Roosevelt era, the estate tax may be doomed, and the Rehnquist Court has manifested a healthy desire to set some limits on the reach of Congress's power and to preserve—admittedly to a limited extent—the sovereignty of the states. In the mid-80's, when Critical Legal Studies, a cheerfully radical and essentially socialist ideology, was sweeping the law schools, it swaggered with confidence in itself as the wave of the future—only to collapse when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989. Friedman fails to mention in his book the Federalist Society, a loosely knit group of Burkeans and free-market classical liberals that is also the fastest-growing lawyer and law-student association today. Their program, consistent with the efforts of the Rehnquist Court, is to breathe new life into the Tenth Amendment; to remind us that the powers not granted to the federal leviathan are reserved to the states and the people; and to suggest that it is inconsistent with the Constitution for us to be governed by unelected law lords. At the law schools at Pepperdine (in Malibu, California) and Ave Maria (in Ann Arbor), at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., at Notre Dame, and in other sheltered spots in the legal academy, some law professors still labor, in the manner of the monks of Iona, self-consciously to preserve and protect the original design of our Constitution. Though there is much is to be learned from Posner and Friedman, salvation lies elsewhere.

Stephen B. Presser is the Raoul Berger Professor of Legal History at Northwestern University School of Law and the legal-affairs editor for Chronicles.

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Voyage to Albion

by Derek Turner

Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination
by Peter Ackroyd
Chatto & Windus; 516 pp., £25

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Englishness may be coming back into fashion. After the union of the English and Scottish crowns and the foundation of modern Britain in 1603, the idea of Englishness was increasingly submerged in, and confused with, the idea of Britishness. It now looks as if the English may be becoming self-conscious again. Three centuries of outward-looking expansionism are being succeeded by a new mood of introspection.

The empire has gone, leaving only the purposeless Commonwealth. Scottish and Welsh devolution has left behind the running sore of the "West Lothian Question." This partial evisceration is to be followed—if the government has its way—by the division of England into regional assemblies that would not only obviate the need for England's traditional parish and county councils but undermine the whole concept of England as a unitary territory. As well as losing powers to the devolved parliaments and (soon) the regional assemblies, Britain's parliament at Westminster has also handed over many of its prerogatives to Brussels, with a corresponding loss of prestige. Since 1948, large-scale immigration (almost all of it to England) has been taking place, and the idea of being British has been diluted so much that it is increasingly meaningless. When viewed in conjunction with the above phenomena, the fact that the tercentenary of the union of the crowns passed almost without official or public notice suggests that the Great Britain "brand" is on the wane. Increasingly, Great Britain is no longer a land but just an island—no longer a home, just a house.

Small wonder, then, that some of England's cleverest sons and daughters should have once again begun to wonder what it is to be English, despite official disapproval. Labour's attitude was well summed up by Jack Straw several years ago, when he opined that the English had long been an especially violent and lawless people and that English nationalism therefore needed to be repressed (a perspective shared by the Conservative leader at the time, who spoke about how "dangerous" English nationalism was, or could be).

Part of this official disapproval may be attributed to the widespread belief that nationalism is no longer "relevant." More may be an expression of the bruised vanity of the political class, which does not like the wounding inference that many people do not actually like the country that politicians have created and fostered. It is also likely that they do not relish the prospect of being sidelined in a political future that they will not be able to control. But essentially, they believe their own dark propaganda and really do think that Englishness equals evil. As always, the "official" view is somewhat out of kilter with the views of many, perhaps most, ordinary people. While they look upon English self-consciousness as a kind of xenophobia, surely it is the English political class's own "synophobia" that is the really interesting psychological problem.

An embarrassing silence had grown up around the whole concept of being English. Enter Peter Ackroyd, who, like an English Luigi Barzini, has come to fix the intellectual underpinnings for a newly resurgent Englishness—albeit an Englishness born of fear rather than hope, a necessary defensive measure rather than a bold assertion. (As Ackroyd notes in another, more specific context, "A sense of mortality, or of dwindling numbers, may . . . encourage a sense of identity, threatened or otherwise.") For such an influential writer as Peter Ackroyd to write a book like *Albion* is hugely significant of the changing mood in England. English nationalism may be just about to become middle class—*ergo*, respectable.

Ackroyd has long concerned himself with English faces and places. As well as his voluminous journalism, and his outstanding *London: The Biography*, he has written biographies of Dickens, T.S. Eliot, Thomas More, and William Blake. Characters in his award-winning novels have included architect Nicholas Hawksmoor (whom he memorably cast as a murderous mystic who erected his buildings according to cabalistic lore), Oscar Wilde, John Milton, William Hogarth, William Byrd, and Tobias Smollett, among many others. Despite an element of camp in some of his writings, his is an original and authoritative voice. Now, he has put all of his vast reading, his literary training, and his superlative writing skills ("the language that speaks of decay falls back into its original patterns, like the countenances of those about to die") to use in a quixotic attempt to rescue Englishness from extinction.

Albion is full of glittering gems of lore and tradition, and gossamer-seeming intimations that, when examined, turn out be stronger than they first appear—spider silk rather than cotton thread. Even when Ackroyd is being fanciful, he is pleasing and provocative: "It may be that those who live upon a small island take a delight in small things," he says, to launch a discussion on the art of the miniature, a distinctively English form. This is admittedly a forced *apercu*, but it is certainly arguable. Rather more forced is

> This desire to miniaturise obsessions . . . could . . . possibly be related to the pattern of English detective stories in the twentieth century, when evil and murderous wickedness were seen to operate in small and cosy country villages.

There must be a unique sensibility within a nation that has maintained her original borders over so many centuries and which, until recently, had endured no important immigration since the Normans. Yet, as is so often the case when describing alleged national traits, Englishness is easier to recognize than to define.

In *Albion*, as with all group studies, there are innumerable gray areas and problems of categorization, as individuals' characteristics move in and out of focus *vis-à-vis* corporate characteristics, and the group gradates into other groups. How does one define Englishness, so as to make it simultaneously flexible enough to allow evolution and rigid enough to have meaning? To make definitions still more difficult, Ackroyd claims that the "mixing or blurring of forms" is itself characteristic of Englishness. There is also the central paradox, as expressed so perfectly by William Vaughan in his 1999 *British Painting*: "The more local and specific a sensibility, the more it may aspire to universality." As all men share certain characteristics, there are bound to be areas of overlap among narrower national categories and individual exceptions to every racial rule. Ackroyd is aware of the problem: "If there is such a thing as a native cast of thought it can properly be understood only in the context of a broadly European sensibility," while "certain qualities defined here as peculiarly English are not uniquely so."

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Thankfully, Ackroyd is alive to the nuances and apparent contradictions and accordingly subtle in his suggestions and definitions. He says repeatedly that one of the hallmarks of the English imagination is "its willingness to adapt and to adopt other influences." He believes, surely correctly, that the English imagination is the product of a blend of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon genes and influences. He notes approvingly Matthew Arnold's suggestion (made in 1867) that this fusion has been productive of "a kind of awkwardness or embarrassment—a tendency to understatement—in the characteristic productions of England." Correctly also, Ackroyd has co-opted the Vikings and Normans into Englishness—although he may be claiming too much when he says, for instance, that Durham Cathedral is a product of Anglo-Saxon, rather than Norman, cultural influences.

The question of how much Norman culture penetrated into Anglo-Saxon culture—or, for that matter, how much the Romans affected the indigenous tribes—is still a subject of hot dispute among historians. For much of her history, England has been less exposed to outside influences than many other European countries. England was at the very edge of the Roman world and no more affected by the Vikings than many other Northern European countries. For hundreds of years after the Norman invasion, the country lay at the periphery of European civilization; even after England's rise to greatness under the Tudors, continental cultural currents caught on late here and arguably did not penetrate as deeply.

The methods are less important than the matter, however, and the best gauge of this book's success is how true to life Ackroyd's selected English qualities seem. So let us look at some of the common traits Ackroyd detects running through the long tale of England, many of which, of course, were transplanted wholesale to the New World—where, just as some Elizabethan English terms have survived in American English, they may yet persist in purer form.

Certain of these are more widely accepted as being "English" than others. For example, surely both "delight in the strange and occluded" and "love of the marvellous" are shared by many peoples. Ackroyd is on surer ground when he lists as classically English characteristics individualism, eccentricity, pragmatism, innate egalitarianism, understatement, plainness of speech, antiquarianism, irony, bawdy comedy, an obsession with death and decay, a preference for amateurism over professionalism, worrying about the weather, literary sentimentalism, love of gardening, a tendency to "consider matters in sequence rather than in system," a "synthetic" rather than an analytic imagination, and, in religion, a fondness for instruction over theology. These examples ring true and therefore suggest that, after all, there *is* such a thing as Englishness, however difficult to define.

One paradoxical problem is that Ackroyd knows too much literary theory. He has blended genres together, not because he does not know the differences among them, but because "In England history has always been considered a manifestation of literature rather than scholarship" and because he likes the idea of synthesizing other people's ideas, in the classic English manner. In other words, Ackroyd is too conscious of what he is doing—although perhaps self-consciousness is inevitable after decades of anti-English demystification. Also slightly grating are his frequent attempts to attach Englishness specifically to Roman Catholicism, as when he writes that "It is important to see how a predominantly Catholic culture and sensibility may still dwell within [the English imagination]." While Ackroyd is probably correct here, his agenda is rather too obvious.

Most regrettably of all, Ackroyd declines to discuss the effects recent political developments have had on England and the English. He seems instinctively to be against many modern leftists, because of his distrust for theories and systems, and is opposed to such presently fashionable notions as that England should have a written constitution. One could not see him as a Thatcherite Conservative, either. (No one who favors, as he does, "smallness, heterogeneity and temperate accommodation" could ever be sympathetic to socialist schemes, free-market reductionism, or political correctness.) It would have been especially interesting, however, to have learned his views on the newly arrived, non-Northern European influences that are having such an impact today in England's cities. Ackroyd actually implies that this is not a phenomenon of importance when he writes that "Englishness is the principle of appropriation. It relies upon constant immigration, of peoples or ideas or styles, in order to survive"—a pleasing sentiment in Matthew Arnold's days, when there had been no mass immigration since 1066, but clearly outdated now. Ackroyd knows that "The idea of a close-knit community . . . is central to the English imagination," but he does not accept that close-knit communities can only exist within very specific cultural contexts. He insists that Englishness is about "placism, as an antidote to racism." He does not seem to consider that races shape places, and *vice versa*, nor does he realize that every civilization has a tipping point beyond which it is inundated rather than influenced.

Nevertheless, all who love England should be grateful to Peter Ackroyd for his pioneering navigational efforts—his own "fantastic travel writing" around the too-little-visited shores of Albion.

Derek Turner is the editor of Right Now!, *published in London.*

The Impoverished Debate

by Clark Stooksbury

Big Lies: The Right Wing Propaganda Machine and How It Distorts the Truth
by Joe Conason
New York: St. Martin's Press; 245 pp., $24.95

◆

Politics, said Henry Adams, "has always been the systematic organization of hatreds." In recent months, best-seller lists have helped to prove Adams' point, by featuring many vituperative political tracts from the left and right. The undisputed queen of the genre is Ann Coulter, whose overheated book *Slander* sold like hotcakes in 2002; lately, she has been joined by Sean Hannity (*Let Freedom Ring*) and Daniel Flynn (*Why the Left Hates America*), among others. On the left, stupid white man Michael Moore denuded numerous forests with sales of *Stupid White Men* (also in 2002). Joe Conason, of *Salon.com* and the *New York Observer*, now enters the fray on Moore's end. *Big Lies* has risen up the *New York Times* best-seller list, in spite of being released in the shadow of Al Franken's much more heavily hyped and similarly themed *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them*.

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In focusing on the Bush administration, the Republican Congress, and their shock troops in the punditocracy, Conason has found a worthy set of targets. The President is a Fortunate Son who took repeated falls before he stumbled into the most powerful job in the world, owing largely to family connections. His supporters, having made "conservatism" synonymous with world domination by the U.S. government, now brand anyone, left or right, who diverges from their agenda as "anti-American."

Conason is harshly critical of Republican tokenism and racial pandering. "Nowhere," he states, "have Republicans failed quite so spectacularly in recent years as in their strange, fitful, sometimes duplicitous attempts to win over black Americans to their party . . . " Although the GOP is, in essence, the party of white America, recent conventions have featured so many "persons of color" that a spectator might think that he was watching a show at the Apollo Theater, were it not for the lily-white audiences. (*Big Lies* calls the 2000 Republican convention a "minstrel show.") Yet Conason downplays the notion that Democrats pander to and agitate blacks. He avoids mentioning such instances as President Clinton's attempt to build up the bogus church-burning scare in 1996 with fictitious memories of similar burnings in Arkansas during his childhood or Vice President Gore's warning (given to a black audience in the closing days of his 2000 campaign) that Bush, as president, would appoint Supreme Court justices who hearkened back to the days when blacks "were considered three-fifths of a human being."

Big Lies makes hay of the right's numerous moral reprobates, elaborating on the sordid details of the personal lives of many Republican politicians and conservative activists. Conason focuses particularly on Newt Gingrich, who led the Republicans to a majority in Congress in 1994 because, according to William Kristol, "they tapped into a deep sense that the country was morally and culturally in trouble."

Yet, could anyone *really* have expected Newt Gingrich to lead a moral and cultural revival? While Gingrich was blaming the moral failings of the left for Susan Smith, a young South Carolina mother who drowned her two sons in 1994 and sent the police on a wild goose chase after a black carjacker, he was also cheating on his second wife, for whom the former speaker of the House left the first Mrs. Gingrich while she was hospitalized in 1978.

Conason finds ample fault with the Republicans' response to terrorism, while holding President Clinton's actions up as exemplary. He indicts Bush and the GOP for attempting to squelch investigation into the causes of the attacks of September 11 and for exploiting the ensuing patriotic atmosphere for political ends. In this regard, he dredges up recent events that are unlikely to appear in Ann Coulter's version of reality:

> Any honest examination of the roots of the September 11 attack would necessarily begin several years before Clinton was elected President—when the Central Intelligence Agency provided up to a billion dollars in aid to the Afghan mujahideen. Those resources, controlled by the Islamist generals who ran Pakistan's Interservice Intelligence agency, were used to build the militant jihadist movements that later formed the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

The Afghan aid program, the purpose of which was to support a *jihad* against the Soviets, originated with President Reagan, whose record in the Middle East is incommensurate with the bloated reputation he enjoys among neoconservatives. Conason touches on Reagan's dithering intervention in Lebanon in the early 1980's, his playing both sides of the street in the Iran-Iraq War, and his attempts to trade arms for hostages with the Iranian regime.

By contrast, President Clinton was, in Conason's eyes, a knight on a white horse in pursuit of terrorism. Conason denies that the ineffectual cruise-missile attacks in August 1998 against Afghanistan and the Sudan had any connection with the presidential sex scandal and suggests that the claim amounts to a smear against "ranking intelligence and military officers such as retired General Anthony Zinni, more recently Bush's Mideast envoy, who encouraged Clinton to take that shot in the dark." (Since there is no possibility of covering over the fact that the U.S. missile strike in the Sudan took out a factory engaged in making pharmaceuticals rather than chemical weapons, Conason simply neglects to mention that aspect of the attack.)

Although *Big Lies* mostly targets neoconservatives and Republican loyalists, Conason also attacks Pat Buchanan as a "racist" and accuses him, in so many words, of faking a knee injury (which, according to Buchanan's autobiography, occurred in 1958) to avoid service in Vietnam.

Regrettably, political debate in this country will remain impoverished so long as the only arguments that get a hearing amount to competing versions of "Hooray for our side."

Clark Stooksbury writes from Knoxville, Tennessee.

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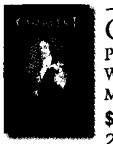

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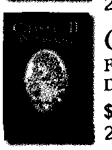

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by Samuel Francis

(Con)fusion on the Right

For the last year or so, neoconservatism has been the subject of an astonishing number of discussions, examinations, and denunciations by the far and "mainstream" left as well as by the right, soft and not so soft. The reason for the scrutiny, of course, is that you cannot expect to engineer an entire war, concoct a series of bold-faced lies about why the war should be fought, and identify the interests of Israel as being indistinguishable from those of the United States, and then denounce everyone who disagrees or criticizes you as "unpatriotic" and "antisemitic" without inviting comment. Nevertheless, the neoconservatives' poor cousins, the paleoconservatives, have not been entirely exempt from scrutiny and criticism themselves. There was the botched hatchet job undertaken by David Frum in *National Review* last year, but, more recently, two other writers, both hostile to the paleos, have delivered their own 40 whacks at the paleo head.

The first is Adam Wolfson, editor of the *Public Interest* and virtually unknown outside of it. In the Winter 2004 issue, Mr. Wolfson, himself a neoconservative, published an article entitled "Conservatives and Neoconservatives." Much of what he says about conservatism, its history, and the various subspecies included in it is simply wrong, and, in general, the article is not worth reading. What he has to say about paleoconservatism, however, is of some interest, because it reveals what the average neocon mind thinks.

What Mr. Wolfson thinks is that paleoconservatives are just plain oddwads who are "not conservatives so much as reactionaries or pseudo-radicals" and who "can fairly be said to despise much of contemporary American life and would like somehow to move beyond the modern American political debate." In itself, that is probably not a bad description of most paleos and what they think, but, to Mr. Wolfson, it is simply inconceivable that any sane person would think it at all, let alone frame it in the body of ideas that some paleos seem to invoke. Thus, *Chronicles* editor Thomas Fleming "has looked to sociobiology, evolutionary theory, and anthropology—hardly traditional conservative guides—for a new beginning," while paleo historian Paul Gottfried has "sought solutions in the philosophy of Carl Schmitt as well as varieties of historicist ideology," and "Samuel Francis . . . has called for 'radical opposition to the regime.'" Clearly, the idea that someone could mount a serious critique of contemporary American life, want to move beyond the "modern American political debate," demand "radical opposition" to the dominant forces in national life, and then frame such "pseudo-radicalism" in ideas drawn from sociobiology and anthropology, Carl Schmitt, and historicism is just too weird. Like most neocons, Mr. Wolfson is deeply frightened by unconventional thought of any species and has trouble assimilating it within the conventions that comfort him. Supposing that his brief and grotesquely simplified account of paleoconservatism has sufficiently exposed its absurdities, he passes on in the bulk of his essay to expounding the brilliance of neoconservatism. There is no need to follow him there.

Mr. Wolfson and his fellow neocons like America the way it is and the way it promises to become in the future—the First Universal Nation, a vast plastic palace of shopping malls, canned sitcoms, fast food, elevator music, two mass political parties that say and do the same thing, and Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace—and anyone who dislikes this or sees a problem with it is a "reactionary or pseudo-radical." In this sense, the neoconservatives really are "conservatives" who wish to conserve the "regime"—the system of domination by which the First Universal Nation is constructed, ruled, and enforced.

It is not very surprising that neocons such as Mr. Wolfson do not like paleoconservatism, but the other critic who popped up recently was perhaps less predictable. Donald J. Devine, vice chairman of the American Conservative Union, launched a critique of the paleos on the ACU Foundation website last December. More precisely, Mr. Devine launched a critique of me.

The criticism was mainly a reply to my column in this space in the December 2003 issue, in which I discussed the recent admissions of failure of the "conservative movement" by various of its elders and concluded that the movement was dead. Mr. Devine apparently did not care for that conclusion, but then, to judge from what he wrote, he did not quite grasp what I was talking about.

In the first place, Mr. Devine writes that I concluded that "fusionism 'died childless.'" In fact, I said nothing whatsoever about "fusionism"—the label for a 1960's makeshift conservative ideology to which Mr. Devine seems to adhere religiously—but addressed the "conservative movement" as a whole. Fusionism was mainly the brainchild of *National Review* editor Frank S. Meyer, an ostensible attempt to wed the ideas of the "traditionalist" wing of the movement (*e.g.*, Russell Kirk *et al.*) with the libertarian wing (*e.g.*, Ludwig von Mises, Milton Friedman, *et al.*). Meyer more or less defined "fusionism" (I don't believe he actually used the term) by the mantra that the American tradition was "a tradition of liberty," so that the True Conservative did affirm the importance of "tradition" so long as the tradition he supported was the one that affirmed "liberty." In fact, Meyer's fusionism amounted to little more than an effort to swallow "traditionalism" and conservatism itself by libertarianism and to read out of the movement anyone who disagreed—including Russell Kirk himself. When Kirk was founding the journal *Modern Age*, a traditionalist organ, Meyer's ally, Frank Chodorov, sent Kirk's founding editors copies of Meyer's attack on Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* in *The Freeman* to try to strangle the new journal in its cradle. The art of the backstab was not invented by neoconservatives. A former Communist Party apparatchik, Meyer quickly set himself up as the pope of postwar conservatism through his column in *National Review* (*Principles and Heresies*—Meyer was the Prin-

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ciple; everyone else, the Heresy) and his indefatigable work as a conservative activist. Meyer was, in fact, a sound conservative on most political issues, but his command of political theory seems to have been confined to a textbook knowledge, and his dogmatism helped drive from the "movement" just about anyone with an independent mind, including some of the best ones.

His manifesto of fusionism, *In Defense of Freedom*, was pounded with criticism by almost every major thinker associated with conservatism—not only Kirk, in a devastating review in the *Sewanee Review*, but Fr. Stanley Parry, Willmoore Kendall, Richard M. Weaver, and Whittaker Chambers, among others. The value of fusionism, however, was that it offered an ideology, a quick and dirty formula by which wet-nosed conservative activists could crib a few slogans from John Stuart Mill or John Locke when they needed to craft a fundraising letter or debate with the campus communists. As such, Meyer's book and the simplicities it offered were a smashing success among the Teen Age Republican set and helped to shape the "conservative mind" of the ensuing generation of the right. Baptized in the ideological kiddie pool of fusionism, the "movement" was ripe for takeover by neoconservatives who despised it but recognized its usefulness for their own purposes.

Fusionism, however, was never identical with the conservative movement, nor did it serve as its chief ideological vehicle, which is what Mr. Devine seems to think, and my criticism of the "movement" had little to do with Meyer or fusionism *per se*. Mr. Devine lurches from one bald inaccuracy and distortion of what I actually wrote to another, the most serious of which is that I denounced "fusionist conservatism" for its preoccupations with "'pet abstractions' of liberty, national security, and the Judeo-Christian tradition." Of course, my point was not to denounce or reject these concepts in themselves but to criticize conservatives for having turned them into little more than convenient slogans and catchphrases. I have been writing columns and articles for literally decades defending all these concepts, but apparently Mr. Devine has missed them.

What seems really to have hurt Mr. Devine's feelings, however, is my claim that conservatism (he says "fusionism") "died childless," and so hurt by this was he that he "sent a memo challenging fusionists to show themselves if, in fact, they still existed."

Happily, "they poured out in hundreds of e-mail responses," although "Of course most were unfamiliar with the term fusionist . . . but as good conservatives, they knew it when they saw it." Well, that's terrific, but, if the "hundreds" who responded did not know the term *fusionism*, in what sense can it be said that they were fusionists at all? Moreover, "hundreds" do not constitute a serious social and political force. You can get "hundreds" to show up at conventions about the existence of Bigfoot and the Roswell Incident, and, if you have to send out e-mail memos to locate the "hundreds," they are probably not exactly a rising tide. My larger point, however, was that the ideology of conservatism as it came to be understood in the 1950's and 60's is now defunct because the social framework—the class and cultural institutions that allowed the abstractions to flourish—has now largely vanished. The counterattack of the fusionists—all the "hundreds" of them—cannot revive that.

As a fairly typical representative of the moribund "conservative movement," Mr. Devine exhibits most of its weaknesses, many of which his hero Frank Meyer helped to import and lock into conservative psychology in the first place: a narrow and arid dogmatism; an impatience with ideas that deviate from the "principles" of conservatism; and an unseemly eagerness to ferret out "heresies" and deviant thoughts. In these respects, he is not very different from Mr. Wolfson, who is so upset at the prospect of a conservatism that knows about sociobiology and Carl Schmitt. Frank Meyer certainly would not have approved of them either, but, of course, Mr. Devine's conservatism and Mr. Wolfson's are quite different—I think.

I know what Mr. Wolfson wants to conserve—the regime of the First Universal Nation—but exactly what it is that Mr. Devine wants to conserve, I cannot tell you, other than the high orthodoxies of fusionism and the pet abstractions of "liberty, national security, and the Judeo-Christian tradition," and I have no idea what any of that means. Does he think that the incumbent ruling class of the United States in the federal and state governments, corporations, media conglomerates, and universities and think tanks supports something like fusionism and the catchphrases of which he is so proud? Does the leadership of any major religious denomination preach them and reflect them in their theology and social beliefs? Do the schools enforce the ethics of the "Judeo-Christian tradition" or the universities teach and explore it with their students and professors? The answer, at least for most paleoconservatives, is obvious enough, which means that the regime, the apparatus by which those who have power in this country maintain it, is not something to be "conserved" but is alien and hostile to the concrete meaning of these concepts; that it is not a "conservative" regime but a regime destructive of tradition, community, order, and liberty; and that those who really do believe in the pet abstractions (which means that they wish them to cease being abstractions and to become animating values and forces in American society) need to work seriously on behalf of "radical opposition to the regime."

I get absolutely nothing from Mr. Devine or his colleagues at the ACU or from any of the other fossils of fusionism that still flop about inside the Beltway that they have any disposition to think or do any of that. What I see among the remnants of "movement conservatism" today is an obsessive devotion to electing Republicans, to denouncing Bill and Hillary, to applauding any and every war the ruling class decides to drag the country into, to carrying water for Big Business whenever and wherever possible, to deluding voters and donors with constant jabber about "family values" and "free enterprise," and to denouncing and "turning away" any "heretic" who seems not to be totally on board with their vaunted "principles."

What paleoconservatism tries to tell Americans is that the dominant forces in their society are no longer committed to conserving the traditions, institutions, and values that created and formed it, and, therefore, that those who are really conservative in any serious sense and wish to live under those traditions, institutions, and values need to oppose the dominant forces and form new ones. I do not expect that Mr. Wolfson and his neocon buddies will agree with or like this position, because they like precisely the forces paleoconservatives oppose. As for Mr. Devine and his hundreds of fusionists, I do not know. Maybe there is still hope that they will see what has happened to the country that they say they want to conserve. But, quite frankly, so irrelevant has the "conservative movement" become that I do not think it makes an awful lot of difference whether they do or not.

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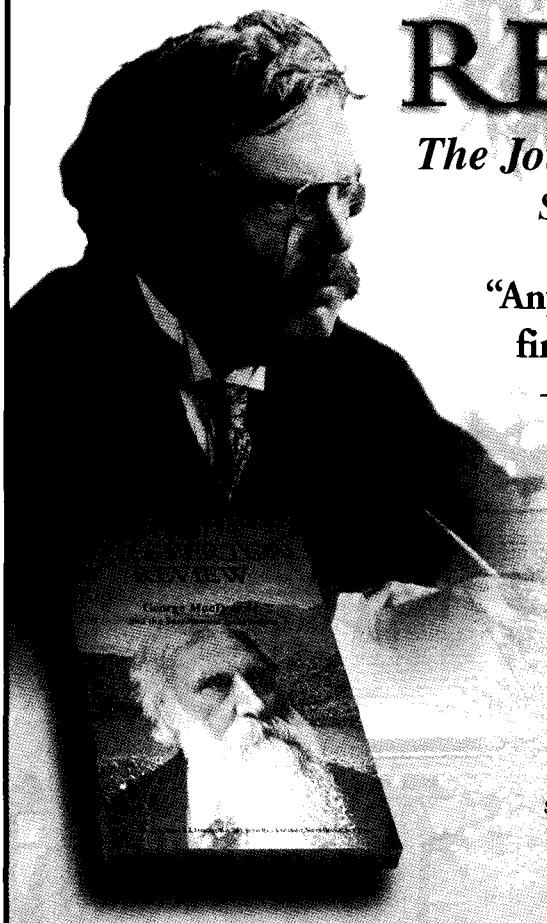

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by Scott P. Richert

One City, No Leaders

Regionalism has been the chief buzzword of the *Rockford Register Star* for several years now, and, for once, on a rather limited level, I actually agree with the local Gannett paper. There are certain problems facing Rockford that require coordination with surrounding communities and with county government, especially questions of land use. This section of Northern Illinois consistently makes the American Farmland Trust's list of the ten most-endangered farming areas, and local developers, taking advantage of politicians' lust for tax dollars, have created suburban sprawl that must look, from above, like a bacterial culture, slowly but inexorably choking off all open space in the petri dish that the LGP calls "the Rock River Valley."

Regionalism, of course, can be consistent with subsidiarity—the idea that the authority to address a particular issue should remain at the appropriate (*i.e.*, the lowest) level. It can also be used to subvert subsidiarity, however, and sometimes in rather subtle ways. Throughout the 12 years of the Rockford school-desegregation lawsuit, for instance, the LGP ran monthly stories on the local real-estate market that routinely discussed *regional* housing values and numbers of sales, masking the destruction in the more geographically limited Rockford school district wrought by the highest property tax rate in the nation. Housing statistics for the district—when they were included at all—were hidden in the final paragraphs of the story, tucked away neatly on an inside page of the business section.

Today, the LGP is performing a similar sleight of hand by focusing on regional unemployment figures of 8.1 percent for December 2003 and 8.3 percent for the entire year (a ten-year high), while confining the figure for the city of Rockford—10.3 percent—to the sixth paragraph of an eight-paragraph story. And while the LGP notes that the unemployment rate for the region has risen for the third year in a row—it was 6.5 percent in 2001 and 7.8 percent in 2002—it provides no historical data for the city.

As Rockford's only daily newspaper, the *Register Star* largely molds the perception of economic issues—not only among the broader public but among business, political, and civic leaders. Thus, there was a bit of a chicken-and-the-egg quality when the LGP ran an article on January 29 entitled "New approach, name at chamber meeting":

> The Rockford Area Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday night unveiled a marketing effort for 2004 that centers on something that no city can lure away and that will never lay off workers: rivers.
>
> Called Four Rivers, the "community image campaign" will feature print, radio and television ads touting the Rock, Pecatonica, Kishwaukee and Sugar rivers in the Rock River Valley . . .

The campaign is only the latest in a series of marketing missteps by the Chamber of Commerce and its sister organization, the Council of 100. While it doesn't reek of despair like the former slogan—"Rockford: A Different Kind of Greatness"—it doesn't include the word *Rockford*, either.

The chamber unveiled the campaign in the wake of another round of bad news: CLARCOR, founded as J.L. Clark in Rockford a century ago, has announced that it will move its corporate headquarters to Nashville; Textron, which had closed two local factories last year, will close two more this year (for a total of 1,050 lost jobs), while opening a $35-million plant in Mississippi; and Atwood Mobile Products will close its final two local factories in 2004, putting 300 people out of work. (The Atwood family has been in manufacturing in Rockford for 94 years.)

While the factory closings and relocations will undoubtedly have regional significance, their impact—like the impact of all the local manufacturing jobs that have been lost over the past three years—will be felt most strongly in Rockford proper. That's why the chamber's new regional focus seems more like a cop-out than the strong business leadership that Rockford needs. If the chamber's new website (*oneregionfourrivers.com*) is any indication, the Four Rivers campaign will focus largely on attracting tourists to the area, but no city of 150,000 can expect to replace an economy based on manufacturing with one based on tourism. And the Four Rivers region, as defined by the chamber, extends well beyond Rockford—in fact, one of the *five counties* included in the region is in southern Wisconsin! Any increase in tourist dollars won't come close to offsetting the lost wages of factory workers.

At the unveiling of its marketing campaign, the chamber announced that it will soon relocate its offices (which it shares with the Council of 100) and will rename itself the Rockford Regional Chamber of Commerce. While the location of the new offices has not been revealed, the name-change likely means that the chamber and the council will move out of downtown—and the significance of that will not be lost on the average Rockfordian. Why should a laid-off factory worker continue to search for a new job in a town whose business leaders seem to have given it up for dead? For that matter, why should anyone employed by a company that might soon leave Rockford not hedge his bets by starting to look for his own way out? After all, the Four Rivers Chamber of Commerce (as local talk-show host Chris Bowman christened it) is unlikely to do much of anything to convince his employer to stay.

Callers to Bowman's radio show often complain that Rockford's leadership lacks vision. Too often, however, the opposite is true: Our business, political, and civic leaders see too far—all the way to Wisconsin, even. What we need are more nearsighted leaders—men like Chris Bowman, who, after rising to the position of political director of the Republican National Committee, returned to his hometown to help it fight for its survival. In Rockford today, alas, such men are in short supply.

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by Andrei Navrozov

Rotten to the Core

"Let us gamble with reason in the name of life," urges Pascal in his celebrated statistical proof for the existence of God. "Let us risk it, for the sake of a win that is infinitely great and just as probable as the loss, which is to say nonexistence." With the cynicism of an inveterate gambler, he then anticipates the cautious layman's objection: "As in any game, the risk is indubitable while the win is doubtful, yet the player accepts the odds for the sake of that doubtful win without even the slightest offence to his reason."

I am writing this in Palermo on New Year's Eve, with exploding firecrackers, unanswered car alarms, and the joyous barking of stray dogs for a backdrop. Here, the voice of reason is possibly the weakest in all of Europe, while the presence of chance is palpable in every passerby's face, at every footstep, on every street corner. Even a Muslim citizen of France, or a British subject from some colonial hole that no longer appears on any map—or, to pick an example closer to home, a native of Honduras residing in the United States as an illegal alien—may easily deceive himself into believing that the history of any of these great and important countries is a reasonable progression, if not always in the direction of ever-increasing grandeur, then at least in some definite direction. No Sicilian is capable of such folly, for the history of his nation, if a nation it be, reads like the crumpled mess of losing lottery numbers in the rubbish bin of a London newsagent.

I open the doors to the balcony to the manifest chaos without. Today, there are only a couple of Beiruts' worth of deafening fusillades, but, come tomorrow, a roll-call of hoarse voices will be rending the air over the piazza, unhampered by the lazy pussyfooting of warm winter rain:

Attia vieni ca'! Accura! "Over here! Take care over here!" Somebody is carrying something unwieldy, wet, stolen, and, at first glance, quite useless.

Dutturi, mittissi a' machina ca'! "Sir, put your car in there!" Somebody important has slipped a couple of coins to the parking attendant with the face of the Gorgon from the Temple of Athena in Syracuse.

Paluzzu, vieni mancia! "Lunch is ready, Paolo!" The corpulent neighbor, blind in one eye and wearing a soiled apron overprinted with red polyurethane tulips, is yelling to her grandson down the well of an inner courtyard, which is used here for communication instead of a mobile phone.

Acchiana! "Come home this minute!" This, from one of the balconies, is addressed to another wayward child, momentarily obscured by the gargantuan African ficus trees in the middle of the square.

Spincionello cavuro! Va' tastalu! "The pizza's hot! Come taste it!" So shouts the fat vendor of fat *sfincione* to the fat passerby. "Ah, good old *sfincione*," muses the latter, feeling for change in his pockets. "A meal in itself, as Mamma used to say. Sticks to your ribs, it does."

Francisco, va' 'catta u pani! "Francesco, go get the bread!" There, Francesco is off, noisily jumping over the tarnished coins of round, silver puddles as he runs all the way to the baker's.

Scinni 'i duocu! "Get down from there!" Who? Why? Can't think at the moment. But one can easily make the necessary inquiries.

From the vantage point of my balcony, the greater part of Europe—the part ostensibly governed by reason—looms as a kind of museum of itself, complete with the coldness of endless corridors, unsmiling uniformed staff, solemn research departments, carefully closed library doors, computerized catalogues, and the rest of it. The tree-lined, Haussmann-balcony stretches of the Champs Elysees, the gray stone tunnels of Pall Mall and Piccadilly, even present-day Rome's vistas of the Forum and other monuments—are these not evocative of gallery spaces, of glass display cabinets and museum bureaucracy?

To whom does this moribund institution—the urban-planned exhibition of a rationally constructed Europe—really belong, and whom does it serve, I wonder? A dozen connoisseurs, a handful of astute historians or talented poets, an honest, hopeful politician or two? Surely they could well take the trouble to locate and identify the priceless objects it contains—liberty, justice, order, and other precious relics—without the helpful labels. A hundred million students? But one does not want to live the life of the young, or so much as rub shoulders with them, any more than one wants to become cannon fodder in the war against the enemies of progress, the only kind of war, as it happens, that these miscreants ever want to fight in. So what's the point of such a culture?

Here in Palermo, Europe is still the way Europe began: a dense, savage forest, not the manicured park at Versailles; a dark seabed teeming with primordial life rather than the swimming pool of a Swiss-run hotel; a sprouting, malodorous patch of iridescent mildew in place of the waxy perfection of a supermarket apple. For it is an *ex post facto* rationalization—and, moreover, a clumsy fib—to claim that the foundations of our civilization were laid by Aristotle, Pythagoras, or Euclid, with the lofty spirit of rational inquiry presiding over the process, while the icon painters of Byzantium, the Spanish algebraists of the Cabala, and the German mystics of alchemy merely came along, so to speak, to muddy the waters of its inherent and, in the end, irrepressible logic.

One look at the thousand-year-old cathedral here, with its organic, intractable, and, at times, simply absurd diachronic weave of forms and styles, or at the equally ancient St. Mark's in Venice, with its spiritual kinship to the sublime folly of St. Basil's in Moscow, ought to expose the authors of that clumsy fib for the charlatans that they are. The immortal soul of Europe is not Nevsky Prospekt or Unter den Linden; it is not civic order or efficient administration or impartial justice; it is not museums, universities, or even libraries. No, it is the living speech of a living people, the vending of fat slices of *sfincione* on Sunday mornings, the noise, the dirt, the dust, and the breath of chance. For it is from risking to lose his reason altogether, not from propping it up with the opinions of others, that man's originality springs. And what's true for us is true for our culture.

Gamblers, not bookkeepers, created my Europe. Dreamers, not lawyers, built it.

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Letter From Mexico

by V. Groginsky

Open Roads to Nowhere

◆

SLOW TRAFFIC RIGHT LANE. It is a simple concept if you are literate and socially conscious. Consideration for others, however—the idea that you are not alone in the world and that it does not belong exclusively to you—is not an inborn value, but one taught by family and society. The realization that, while we may have our own way of living and path to follow, others have theirs and we must not cause hindrance or obstruct forward progress, is cultural in origin, and neither instinctual nor universal.

In a perfect hemisphere, all would share an harmonious ideal of traveling across the continent in security and ease, a river of goods and services. While we are not flying on magic carpets, we do have social norms and customs that allow for an orderly movement of people and products. And, indeed, the Open Roads provision of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) would have us believe that such is the case throughout the Western Hemisphere. But only someone who has never driven in Mexico could fall for such a fantasy.

Imagine a country where might makes right, a nation not of law and order but of the institutionalized abuse of power throughout society, where law-enforcement officials are part of almost every known band of professional kidnappers, and police commit armed robberies, killing their own colleagues in the line of duty; where those involved in kidnapping, drug trafficking, murder, rape, carjacking, and road piracy are rarely caught or prosecuted and, if sent to prison, can buy their freedom with relative ease and at a low price. Imagine a place where there are few rules of the road (which are not respected when they do exist), where semi-trailers (even two- or three-carriages long) do not employ lane-change signals, run automobiles off the road with impunity, and drive 20 m.p.h. on a 70-m.p.h. highway—side by side with another semi, blocking all traffic for miles. Imagine a system where few motorists use mirrors or shoulder checks to verify if it is clear to enter traffic. Imagine a society where there is no individual responsibility or accountability, where those involved in auto accidents can simply walk away from the smoldering wrecks (at least, those who survive). *Bienvenidos a Mexico.*

In Mexico, liability is virtually nonexistent—hence the popular refrain: *No importa quien tiene la culpa, sino, quien tiene.* ("It doesn't matter who's at fault; what matters is who has money to be had.") And, if defensive driving is the aspiration of driver's education in the United States, the lack of comparable training in Mexico—as well as the Mexican penchant for petty vendettas for anything as small as passing someone on the highway—creates a lethal combination of aggressive and reckless behavior on the road.

Perhaps no other issue arising from NAFTA has been so controversial as that of international transit for commercial vehicles.

George W. Bush and other proponents of Open Roads talk idealistically about the efficiency and freedom of Mexican and U.S. trucks crossing the border to deliver goods. Now, thanks to expanded free markets and modernization, there need be no more bureaucratic or traffic tie-ups on the border, which used to occur when containers had to be switched to a transit vehicle and then loaded onto national carriers on the other side of the border. Minor details of road safety, law enforcement, and environmental and economic consequences are all simply brushed away.

Others, such as the Teamsters, the California Trucking Association, the California Labor Federation, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Planning and Conservation League, have lobbied against the provision, citing a host of safety, economic, and environmental issues. (The Teamsters in particular have lobbied hard, while their critics have accused them of merely fearing the loss of American trucking jobs to illegal Mexican competitors who would work unregulated and for a fraction of the wages of their American counterparts.)

Ralph Nader's Public Citizen has also strongly opposed the provisions, citing unreasonable dangers on U.S. roads from Mexican trucks:

> Texas border communities within the commercial border zone in which Mexican trucks are permitted have seen a dramatic increase in highway fatalities and serious injuries from crashes involving trucks with Mexican registrations . . .

Even the *Los Angeles Times*, on August 26, 2002, came out against Open Roads:

> Caving in to diplomatic pressure, the Bush administration has chosen to simply [*sic*] ignore American environmental laws. Bush is compromising public health in the process . . . there are ways to satisfy the requirements of NAFTA other than by simply throwing open our borders. Mexico's fleet of tractor trailers is much older—and dirtier—than that in the U.S. Before 1993, truck engines in Mexico were unregulated. Even engines manufactured more recently don't begin to meet environmental standards . . . for U.S. engines. Yet, in deciding to open the border, the administration declined to consider the environmental impacts of these diesel-spewing behemoths . . . Mexican trucks on average generate 150% more smog-forming nitrogen oxide and 200% more dangerous particulate matter than U.S. trucks . . . California already has some of the most polluted, unhealthy air in the nation, the cause of respiratory disease and premature death . . . The proposed presidential action once again raises a question central to the NAFTA debate: Must increased free trade come at the expense of American environmental standards and the public health? The short answer is no. . . . The trade agreement with Mexico requires us to allow Mexican trucks access to U.S. roads, but that doesn't mean we have to exempt the trucks from all U.S. laws.

The enforcement of national and state transport laws—as well as NAFTA regulations—remains a problem unresolved by state and federal governments. In essence, a two-tier system exists, discriminating against U.S.-based carriers: As

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Tod Spencer of the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) testified at a joint U.S. Senate Committee hearing,

> There is no single enforcement official in the United States who can stop a Mexican truck and determine whether a foreign trucker has a valid commercial driver's license, determine whether the trucker has valid insurance, determine whether the truck is safe, determine whether the foreign truck was properly entered in the country, and determine whether the load is a legal NAFTA shipment into or out of the country. . . .
>
> More importantly, even if one enforcement official could identify all of those facts, he or she would not have the authority to enforce more than one of these issues. . . . [T]wo of our four border states with Mexico have not given . . . enforcement personnel the power to put out-of-service a trucker found to not have the proper DOT operating authority. [The] administration is hurrying to allow Mexican trucks to operate not just in the border states but in all 48 lower states. . . . [E]very state needs to give its officers the power to put out-of-service those trucks operating in violation of our laws, including the NAFTA rules.

Spencer also noted that

> state officials are the only enforcement personnel that a foreign trucker is ever likely to see . . . State officials do not have the training to recognize whether a truck is in compliance with customs [and] immigration rules, or whether a load is being hauled legally under NAFTA rules . . . Some enforcement personnel have told OOIDA that their biggest frustration is not being able to communicate with foreign drivers to get their cooperation to conduct a safety inspection (being able to communicate in English is a requirement of the federal motor carrier safety regulations) . . . the enforcement officials in some states have given up trying to inspect foreign trucks. They just wave foreign trucks through the weigh station while U.S. truckers are stopped and put through the normal inspections. This is an outrageous state of affairs that we did not bargain for in NAFTA.

The language barrier is essentially a taboo subject, given the climate of political correctness, but, according to a July 24, 2002, UAW report, it can present concrete obstacles to safety and order:

> "It's not talked about widely, but in terms of enforcement mechanisms, it's a big deal," [Major John] Hill [of the Indiana State Police] said. Inspectors already are dealing with a big upsurge in non-English speaking drivers. Michigan truck inspectors have to deal with more and more drivers from Russia, Eastern Europe and elsewhere who don't read, write or speak English, according to Bob Powers, commander of the motor carrier division of the Michigan State Police. Not knowing English is a safety issue when it comes to reading signs, especially with all the automated electric signs now used on highways. It also becomes difficult and sometimes impossible to do inspections when drivers can't speak English.

A larger issue remains: We are not all the same. The cultural differences come to a head-on collision in the way we travel and work. Courtesy *versus* egotism, order *versus* chaos, law *versus* anarchy, safety *versus* kamikaze behavior. As with guns, it is not the truck that is dangerous but the man behind the hammer.

V. Groginsky writes from Mexico City.

Russell Gordon

A three-semi-trailer collision on a main north-south highway brings traffic to a standstill for hours. The drivers fled the scene.

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by Srdja Trifkovic

The Balkan Terror Threat

A chain is as strong as its weakest link. In President Bush's "War on Terror," that weak link is not in the Middle East or North Africa or the Subcontinent but in Europe. For years, *Chronicles* has been warning that flawed pro-Muslim Western policies would turn the Balkans from a "protectorate of the New World Order into an Islamic threat to Western interests" (see, for example, "Osama bin Laden: The Balkan Connection," *Chronicles Intelligence Assessment*, December 2001). Such warnings were routinely ignored or discounted by the media and politicians alike. This attitude is rapidly changing, however. A spate of media reports and statements by Western officials over the past two months indicates that the threat is finally being taken seriously.

"US to build Balkan anti-terrorism center in Bulgaria," news agencies reported on January 6, to monitor and detect terrorist threats to the United States and other countries. In addition to the CIA-staffed center, Bulgarian media reported, the FBI also plans to set up an office in Sofia. U.S. intelligence experts were quoted as saying that Al Qaeda has a training base in the Balkans and uses the region as a terror route to the West.

That same week, an Associated Press report warned that terrorists could use the Balkan route to sneak a nuclear weapon into Europe by land. Tom Sanderson of the Center for Strategic and International Studies and Chris Wright of the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London claimed that smuggling routes through Southeastern Europe were well established and that there was "a lot of scope" for collusion between terrorist groups and criminal gangs. Both criminals and terrorists benefit from heroin trafficking, most of it of Afghan origin. The trade is largely controlled by Albanian Muslims, with the *mujahideen* providing the logistics.

Der Spiegel reported on December 8, 2003, that the "monstrous" King Fahd mosque in Sarajevo—the largest in Europe, on which the Saudis spent a total of $20 million—is a breeding ground for Islamic extremism in Bosnia, with some preachers openly inciting the faithful. Western security experts have said that Bosnia could become "a hotbed of extremists ready to . . . carry the fight of the Islamic terror syndicates against the 'godless West' to the southeast of Europe." This gives cause for "extreme concern" to a German intelligence chief, August Hanning. The magazine goes on to quote a French expert as saying that, of some 5,000 foreign *mujahideen* who had fought on behalf of Izetbegovic, many remained behind. The number is unknown, but there are "too many to be safe," according to George Friedman, director of Stratfor. The Balkans are "of strategic importance" to Al Qaeda, he says, and it can use the region for its goals at any time.

Western officials reflect such concerns with increasing frequency. The U.S. ambassador in Sarajevo, Clifford Bond, thus declared on December 17 that there is a terrorist threat in Bosnia because of "foreign elements" who arrived there during the war and stayed on. In the same week, the cabinet of Greece's Prime Minister Costas Simitis expressed concern over the threat from Bosnia to the Olympic Games in August 2004.

"UN Adds Bosnian Charity Director to Al Qaeda List," Reuters reported only days later. Safet Durguti, an Albanian born in Kosovo, was added to the list of 300 individuals whose assets should be frozen because of suspected ties to Osama bin Laden or his Al Qaeda network. Durguti—apparently the key link between Islamic fundamentalists in Kosovo and Bosnia—is the director of Vazir, a charity based in the Bosnian city of Travnik. According to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Vazir was simply another name for the Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation, a Saudi charity that was placed on the U.N. list in March 2002.

Dozens of similar statements and articles appeared in different Western sources last January alone. Policy analysts and government officials alike freely admit that the problem exists. It has acquired massive proportions and may not be easily managed any longer. Whether it can be resolved short of a major restructuring of the current Balkan architecture is unclear.

The threat is not limited to a few elusive extremists: The ruling establishment

in Sarajevo has had a symbiotic relationship with the sources of Islamic radicalism for over a decade. "Iran, Bosnia to Expand Ties," reported Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting on December 21, regarding a meeting of the Bosnian ambassador to Tehran, Ibrahim Efendic, and Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. The latter said that "the Jihad of the Bosnian and Palestinian nations is praiseworthy and a source of honor for Muslims":

> The resistance and faith of these nations will be registered in the history of Islam, he added . . . Highlighting the geographical status of the Balkans, Rafsanjani said Iran attaches great importance to Bosnia and Herzegovina and expressed the hope to witness further expansion of bilateral ties between the two countries. The outgoing Bosnian ambassador lauded the humanitarian aid rendered by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The significance of this overlooked story is that Bosnian Muslim government officials are received and treated in Tehran as allies in a *jihad* and that Muslims see Bosnia as no less important than Palestine to their strategic design. As for Iran's "humanitarian aid," this is a euphemism for illegal arms shipments from Tehran to Sarajevo in 1994. They were carried out with the active connivance of the Clinton administration and in violation of the arms embargo initially demanded by Clinton. Along with the weapons, Iranian Revolutionary Guards and VEVAK intelligence agents entered Bosnia in large numbers.

The problem of collusion between U.S. administrations and Islamic radicals antedates the wars of Yugoslav succession. Its roots go back to the support Osama bin

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Laden and others received from the United States following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. Mistaken and shortsighted as this strategy turned out to be, it may have been justified by the dictates of the Cold War. The underlying assumption was that militant Muslims could be used and discarded—like Diem, Noriega, the shah, and the Contras. For the ensuing two decades, Washington almost invariably supported the Muslims—most notably in Bosnia and Kosovo. By January 1996, Jacob Heilbrunn and Michael Lind of the *New Republic* approvingly wrote of the U.S. role as the leader of Muslim nations from the Persian Gulf to the Balkans, with the Ottoman lands becoming "the heart of a third American empire."

The strategists who had sought to turn militant Islam into a pliant tool had underestimated the danger of "blowback" at first, but, over the years, they have bound good men to bad policy and reinforced failure with gold. Their strategy of effective support for Islamic ambitions in pursuit of short-term political or military objectives has helped to turn Islamic radicalism into a truly global phenomenon.

The Bosnian chapter of this strategy dates back to the administration of President George H.W. Bush, whose Acting Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger made it clear in early 1992 that his goal was to support the Muslim side in Bosnia in order to mollify the Muslim world and to counter any perception of an anti-Muslim bias regarding American policies in the Middle East. President Clinton's policy in the Balkans further strengthened an already aggressive Islamic base in the heart of Europe. The unspoken assumption of the architects of such policies—that generosity would be rewarded by loyalty—is mistaken: Loyalty to unbelievers is not a Muslim trait. As Yohanan Ramati has remarked, Muslim pragmatism "prescribes that when dealing with fools, one milks them for all one can get."

The subsequent portrayal in the Western media of Muslims as innocent martyrs in the cause of multicultural tolerance concealed the fact that the Bosnian war was primarily religious in nature. "The small jihad is now finished . . . but now we have to fight a bigger, second jihad," Mustafa Ceric, the Reis-ul-Ulema (supreme Muslim cleric) of Bosnia-Herzegovina declared when the November 1995 Dayton Accords were signed. They specifically called for the expulsion of all foreign fighters, but the Muslim-controlled Sarajevo government circumvented the rule by granting Bosnian citizenship and passports to unknown numbers of *mujahideen*. The result was over a dozen executed or planned outrages—from a shootout in Lille to a terrorist cell in Montreal, from the planned attack on Los Angeles International Airport to a series of explosions in Morocco and Istanbul in 2003. All were directly traced to the Bosnian connection.

That connection will not go away unless Western policies change. The first step for the Bush administration should be to scrutinize the activities of the high representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Paddy Ashdown of Great Britain. This failed social-democratic politician spent the Bosnian war acting as an advocate for the Muslim side, which he glorified as a paragon of multiethnic tolerance, and, to this day, he continues to deny the Muslim terrorist threat in his Balkan fiefdom. His behavior is reprehensible but not surprising. Politicians hate admitting that they have been wrong; in addition, Ashdown's acceptance of reality would make his current position untenable—which must be a cause of some anxiety to a 50-something man with no alternative employment, no independent means, and no prospects.

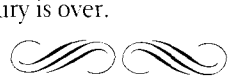
Ashdown's motives in denying the Bosnian reality matter less than the consequences of his actions for the security of the Western world. Especially serious is his current effort to terminate the autonomous intelligence capability of the Serbian entity in Bosnia, Republika Srpska (RS), by integrating it with the secret service of the Muslim entity. Over the years, the RS security service has compiled a comprehensive database detailing the activities of Islamic terrorists and the identities of their sympathizers and active supporters in Bosnia-Herzegovina, including many high-ranking government officials. Forcing it into union with the Muslim security service would deny the Serb entity the capability to track terrorist-related activities and would help the Muslim side to cover up its involvement with terrorists.

Ashdown's deputy and enthusiastic assistant in the piecemeal liquidation of the Republika Srpska is American diplomat Donald Hays, a Democrat who owed his rise to the Clinton administration—specifically, to Richard Holbrooke. In October 2003, Hays escorted his former boss Holbrooke around Bosnia, reportedly introducing him as "the next US Secretary of State." According to a report by the International Strategic Studies Association, Hays' motive for attempting to suppress the links between the Islamic establishment in Sarajevo and radical Muslims is partly domestic. He wants to avoid the embarrassment of having the Clinton administration's links to the terrorists in Bosnia and Kosovo brought to light in an election year in which the Clinton camp has thrown its weight behind Wesley Clark, who led the NATO attack on Yugoslavia in 1999.

Recalling Hays and demanding Ashdown's replacement would be a cost-free exercise in prudence by the Bush administration and a long-overdue major step toward countering the terrorist threat in the Balkans. To make that step meaningful, however, it would be necessary to understand the nature of past errors. A generation ago, it was understandable, even excusable, for policymakers in Washington to try to use Muslims in their fight against communism in just the way their predecessors tried to use the Church in Italy in the early 1950's. By now, however, it should be evident that appeasement only breeds the contempt and arrogance of the radicals and fuels their ambition. The West is in a war of religion, whether she wants that or not, and the enemy sees the Balkans as a battlefield.

On the Islamic side, this war is being fought in the belief that the West is on her last legs, demographically and culturally. Some leaders—including President Bush—may have been hoping to domesticate Islam under the aegis of the nondenominational deism that they profess. That will fail, and an "internal reform" of Islam will remain as elusive as ever. Any potential for internal reform is only undermined by the appeasement of radical Islam in the Balkans. It enhances a downward spiral of hate and spite and breeds more terrorism.

Western policy in the Balkans should be reappraised, because to continue encouraging the Muslim sense of pure victimhood is to feed would-be suicide bombers with a political pap that nourishes their hate. If the War on Terror is to be meaningful, that appeasement must stop. Pandering to Islam's geopolitical designs—in the Balkans or anywhere else—and sacrificing smaller Christian nations in the process is not only bad, it is counterproductive: The morsels will only whet the extremists' appetite, paving the way to a major global confrontation well before this century is over. c



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CHRISTIANITY

Pulling the Trigger

by David Mills

At the end of the Episcopal Church, U.S.A.'s General Convention last summer, an academic friend, not an Episcopalian, asked me, "What argument is advanced against blessing polyamorous unions by those Episcopalians who favor the blessing of same-sex sexual unions? Or do they pull the trigger and say that the blessing of same-sex unions is only the beginning?"

As almost everyone knows, the Episcopal Church having risen briefly to being newsworthy from her usual irrelevance, the Convention had, by a comfortable margin, confirmed the election of a man openly living with his boyfriend (what other word do you use?) to be the next Episcopal bishop of New Hampshire. Conservatives protested, appealed to Anglicans in more conservative countries, and promised to have a meeting in October.

Her two houses (the bishops and the deputies, which included four priests and four laymen from each diocese) had also voted by about the same margin to let individual parishes celebrate homosexual "marriages" if they wanted to do so. This was promoted by almost everyone as a compromise, and "moderates" (timid liberals) rushed to say that it did not give official approval to the "marriages" but only recognized the differences of opinion within the Church and allowed people to talk about them.

Bishop John Lipscomb of Southwest Florida, for example, pledged to "do everything possible to help my diocese turn to godly conversation about what will continue to be a difficult issue." Bishop Henry Parsley of Alabama declared that:

> Our liturgy expresses what we believe. So we need to be particularly clear theologically before we move forward liturgically. This amendment helps us be a church together as we seek theological consensus more solid and sound than we have found.

You have, in these bishops' words, the reason the moral innovators in the Episcopal Church will not "pull the trigger" and admit that approving homosexual "marriages" is but the first step in expanding the range of sexual practices they will eventually approve—or "celebrate," in Episcopal jargon.

I wrote my friend to say that this is a trigger the homosexualists will not yet pull, because, though they hold so much political power in the Episcopal Church, getting the votes they need for such measures as homosexual "marriages" depends on keeping the "moderates" from seeing what is going on—or, more accurately, keeping the more conservative "moderates" from seeing what is going on and letting the more liberal "moderates" pretend that they don't see what is going on.

Both sort of moderate insists upon the myth of the homosexual couple who are in every respect, except for sexual difference, just like the ideal heterosexual couple. They believe in monogamy (of a sort, about which more later). They simply want Adam and Steve to join Adam and Eve at the altar, in the pews, and in the Sunday-school parents' meetings.

The leading sodomitical propagandists still speak as if monogamy were their present practice and future goal, which only needs to be given official sanction as a matter of justice and inclusivity and as the natural fruit of our evolving understanding of "the freedom we have in Christ." (They are very big on invoking the Lord.) Hearing them speak of their unions, you could imagine that you were listening to someone describe the world of Mayberry, North Carolina, or the Walton Family, or a picture from the Norman Rockwell collection.

They do not hide the problems, but they find in them more evidence that the Church should do as they demand. If some of their peers are promiscuous, and promote promiscuity, they claim that these men and women sleep around because they do not have the social supports heterosexual people have and because heterosexual people hate them and teach them to hate themselves. "Homophobia" drives the homosexual from bed to bed. Letting him marry in the Church would be a pastoral act, an act of kindness as well as justice.

And so, in public, the homosexualists plead only for the Church's approval of homosexual marriages. One might be inclined to assume that they are sincere in this (though I, who reported on the Episcopal Church for 15 years, do not), but they give the game away in the way they speak of themselves.

Roughly 20 years ago, they began to speak of the "lesgay" movement, which, between five and ten years ago, became the "lesbigay" movement. Shortly after that, it became the "lesbigaytrans" or "lbgt" movement when they added the "transgendered." The "transgendered" are those who, for whatever reasons, feel more comfortable living as if they were the opposite sex, even if they don't want to have themselves surgically remade.

The change from "lesgay" to "lesbigay" meant something more than merely adding another oppressed group to the movement. The homosexualists assume that you must obey your sexual desires if you are to be true to your "nature," or "the way God made me." That is the reason they identify themselves by their sexual tastes.

Thus, in calling their movement the "lesbigay" movement, they have added to the list of things they want approved a sexuality that does not follow the rules they currently approve in public. As bisexuals by definition cannot be monogamous if they are to be true to their nature, the propagandists have approved promiscuity without exactly admitting it. The bisexual being true to his nature has to sleep with at least two people, one man and one woman, without settling on one or the other.

The "moderates" ignore this evidence that their homosexualist allies intend more than lifelong unions. I think they ignore it for two reasons, as I suggested already: First, some of them are genuinely dim and really do think a reasonable line can be drawn at homosexual marriage; and, second, many of them are much more liberal in these matters than they want to be seen as being in public.

And they have a logical problem as well as a political problem. Both must know (at some level) that, if they object to bisexuality, they will have to object to homosexuality, as all the reasons for approving the second justify the first as well. We have the same reasons for thinking sex ought to be restricted to a partner of

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the opposite sex that we have for thinking that it ought to be restricted to one partner.

My own view is that many homosexualists really do want monogamy, of a sort.—the serial monogamy now standard among even conservative congregations, where remarriage after divorce is not thought in any way a problem—even when a man leaves his wife and children for a much younger, shapelier woman. All they want is a series with more entries or episodes packed into a much shorter amount of time. They have the same idea of sex and commitment as do many conservatives, only they have changed the time-span and the limit.

On top of which, the homosexualists are only asking the Episcopal Church to do with Scripture and Tradition and the rest of the Anglican Communion what it did in 1976 in approving the ordination of women—which 85 percent of the conservatives approve wholeheartedly. They (the moral innovators) are genuinely surprised that the conservatives continue to condemn one and cheer the other. They are, after all, the theological products of the Church the conservatives helped to create, sustain, and nurture.

David Mills is the editor of Touchstone (www.touchstonemag.com).

THE MEDIA

Pink Elephants on Parade

by Marian Kester Coombs

More than ever before, homosexual characters and situations are being featured on television. Needless to say, the lay of TV Land is overwhelmingly favorable: cheery, cuddly, cute, and camp.

The first of such programming originated in the formerly Great Britain, either imported directly (*East Enders*, *Absolutely Fabulous*) or adapted to the American small screen (*All in the Family*). This, the French would note, is only to be expected.

Interestingly, a six-week series called *Metrosexuality* ran in the United Kingdom back in 2001, a good two years before Howard Dean stumbled across the term during his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Between 1961 and 1970, there existed exactly one American homosexual television character. Between 1971 and 1980, 58 materialized. Between 1981 and 1990, there were 89. Between 1991 and 2000, 306. Since 2000, the rate of unnatural increase has only accelerated.

Does this mean that there are 300 times more "gays" in our society than there were 40 years ago?

The answer to this question depends on one's theory of homosexuality. In my view, becoming homosexual is primarily a function of flawed embryogenesis: Stress on the mother interrupts the vital action of testosterone upon the male fetus, leaving his brain insufficiently male. This theory explains why there are so many fewer "gay" women than men, why so many lesbians are discretionary or situational (*á la* Anne Heche), and why the homosexual orientation (inversion) is so deeply, intractably rooted in a person's very being.

By the light of this theory, there are now probably no more—and very likely fewer—homosexuals *per capita* than heretofore, if only because so many of the neurotic women who would have unsexed their male infants in the womb now have abortions instead of children.

Homosexuals, like the poor, have always been with us, a fact of life neither to be celebrated nor hidden, but, in the past, they "passed," like Cole Porter or like Tennessee Williams, who spun heroines out of his own psyche and its cravings.

The present abundance of homosexual material in the media results, in large part, from the quest to titillate, of course. The problem is that homosexuality, unlike other *outré* sexual situations, is a turn-off to the vast majority of viewers. So, while it may function briefly as a lure, forbidden fruit, to generate buzz for a show, in the long and even the short run, it does not deliver an audience like such truly prurient fare as *The O.C.* and *The Sopranos*.

An even greater part of the reason for the increased visibility of homosexuals in the media is politics, propaganda, and p.r.

In November 1987, the homosexual magazine *Guide* published an article by Marshall Kirk and Erastes Pill called "The Overhauling of Straight America." A sort of *Protocol of the Elders of Queer* or *Mein Camp(f)*, this document preaches the creation of a cult of "gay" victimization and then

> the desensitization of the American public concerning gays and gay rights. To desensitize the public is to help it view homosexuality with indifference instead of with keen emotion. Ideally, we would have straights register differences in sexual preference the way they register different tastes for ice cream or sports games: she likes strawberry and I like vanilla; he follows baseball and I follow football. No big deal. . . .
>
> In no time, a skillful and clever media campaign could have the gay community looking like the veritable fairy godmother to Western Civilization.

A charm offensive very much like that proposed by Kirk and Pill has, in fact, been conducted *via* TV (and movies to a lesser extent). Virtually the only negative portrayal of homosexual behavior has been on *Oz*, an HBO prison drama that depicts homosexual predators behind bars. The majority are straight out of the civil-rights movement's victimological playbook.

One of the first sympathetic portrayals was in 1994, on *General Hospital*, where an actor playing a homosexual activist melodramatically perished of AIDS, both on screen and off. Such soaps as *All My Children* have provided bathetic story lines for homosexual characters since the 1980's.

The long-running British soap opera *East Enders* (1985-present) is famed for introducing characters drawn from the margins of London life, such as Pakis and West Indians outspoken in their lack of gratitude for the blessings of the British social order. So the show's pioneering use of multiple homosexual characters, male and female, is all in the game.

Armistead Maupin's insipid *Tales of the City*, originally a San Francisco newspaper series, inspired a British-financed dramatization in 1993 that did not spread to the United States until later. In the course of three endless sets of tales, it provided employment for quite a few happy campers, including Lance Loud (the homosexual son of the family that pioneered reality TV) and Sir Ian McKellen.

The Clinton years were a bonanza for "gay" characterizations. *Northern Exposure* not only situated itself in an Alaskan town founded by two lesbians but, in 1994, staged one of TV's first "gay weddings."

Beverly Hills 90210 had several ho-

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mosexual characters, as does *Melrose Place* (1992-99), *Friends*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (which boasts lesbian witches), *ER* (series regular Dr. Maggie Doyle came out in 1997), the salacious teen soap *Dawson's Creek*, *The West Wing*, *Ally McBeal*, MTV's *The Real World*, and *Six Feet Under*.

On the otherwise macho *Nash Bridges*, Nash's sister is a lesbian. Several reality shows, such as *Survivor* and *Big Brother*, have featured homosexual participants.

Queer As Folk is a British television program that first aired in 1999 with a cast of urban homosexual friends that include a lesbian couple and their "son." After testing the waters across the pond, the series begat an American version, transposed from Manchester, U.K., to Pittsburgh, PA, which has been shown regularly on cable since 2000. *In the Life*, an extremely graphic talk and variety show for homosexual audiences, began airing as early as 1992 on PBS, where it may still be found.

Most programming has been aimed at homosexual men, but it is interesting to note that the first show with an "out" homosexual star on American TV was *Ellen*, broadcast from 1994 to 1998. Ellen DeGeneres formally came out at the end of the 1996-97 season; her series was cancelled because of low ratings less than a year later.

The fate of Rosie O'Donnell's talk show (highly rated until its star began to make a nuisance of her homosexuality), coupled with the fate of *Ellen*, suggests that, while audiences may feel less threatened by lesbianism than by male homosexuality, they also find it less attractive, less "must-see." Survey after survey has shown that, of all groups, lesbians have the lowest sex drive and the fewest "partners." But why let facts get in the way of the agenda? Showtime is producing a series called *The L Word*, full of beautiful lesbians (played, for the most part, by straight actresses) who "sleep around" nonstop. The (lesbian, of course) reviewer for the *New York Times* notes this "fantasy" level of sexuality and manfully adds that she's "not complaining"—but she is, no doubt, wondering where these dames have been all her life.

The first show to feature a homosexual lead after the *Ellen* debacle was *Will & Grace* on NBC. Airing from 1998 to the present, it features Eric McCormack as Gay Everyman Will Truman (nice name), Debra Messing as Grace, Debbie Reynolds as Grace's Jewish mother, and Sean P. Hayes as the series' resident (and contrasting) flaming femme, Jack.

An episode that aired on December 11, 2003, suffices to convey the flavor of *Will & Grace*. "The only thing getting me through the holidays," whines Will, is good tickets to the Barry Manilow concert. To get to meet "the Manilow," Will flirts with the stage manager, whose *quid pro quo* is that Will come with him on a "date" to Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love.

Apart from flogging two conceits that demonstrate sitcoms' origin in a simpler, more human time—first, that, in a large city, you will run into everyone you know in the space of one block and 15 minutes; second, that strangers will chat you up amusingly rather than pretending, successfully, that you do not exist—the episode manages in only one half-hour to vamp on Debbie Reynolds, make light of "gay" sexual blackmail, and mock "the holidays" ("The holidays are all about misery . . . and obligation . . . ").

"She's the yin to my yang—I just can't actually put my yang in her," quipped *Will & Grace* star Eric McCormack when interviewed on Bravo *apropos* of his co-star Debra Messing, to much appreciative laughter. Bravo is the premier "gay" television network. Its movie choices reflect this, as does its original programming (*Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*) and the first homosexual reality-dating series (*Boy Meets Boy*).

In terms of creating a warm and fuzzy image of homosexuals for mass consumption, *Queer Eye* is sheer brilliance. Carson, Todd, and the rest of the Fab Five appear harmless, adorable and oh-so-helpful—like Mammy in all those Hollywood fables. You would never dream what they would like to do to the unsuspecting straight whom they are salvaging for his wife or girlfriend; only a few random, mocking hints in the aftermath of the makeover remain to suggest the great divide between "breeders" and those "in the life."

If proof were needed that homosexual themes are critical—not popular—favorites, the AIDS-apotheosizing miniseries of Tony Kushner's play *Angels in America* has not even been released theatrically but made it onto 2003's top-ten lists of several influential film critics and, of course, dominated the Golden Globe Awards.

Two recent publicity coups have given heart to homosexual media activists: the openly homosexual Richard Hatch's win in 2000 of the Malaysian round of the reality show *Survivor*, and the prominent role of openly homosexual Sir Ian McKellen as the wizard Gandalf in the wildly successful *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy.

Sir Ian has been so emboldened by his celebrity that he actually appears at rallies crying, "Come out! Come out and join us!" to all and sundry. Yet his performance as Gandalf clearly shows he is aware that, if there were anything the least bit lascivious about the wizard's affection for hobbits, audiences would recoil in horror.

It is one thing to flirt with young actors on a movie set; it is quite another to imply that underlying Sam's devotion to Frodo, for example, is sexual desire. At the end of *The Return of the King*, as Frodo embraces Sam for the last time before he departs for the West, deeply kissing his brow, the scene's power depends on the purity and spirituality of their comradeship. So does male bonding in the real world of power.

In the end, that is just what homosexuals cannot fathom: They really do not understand that normal men do not have, as Andrew Sullivan has expressed it, "the deepest emotional need" for sodomy. Thus, having the hero suddenly kiss his buddy on the lips is not exciting but repulsive. No matter how many times you show it, it just does not make any converts; in fact, the less you show it, the better.

What is fueling the homosexual makeover of American culture?

Societies with an excess of men are reputed to be undemocratic, rigidly hierarchical, and ruled essentially by homosexual cliques. What of societies with an excess of women? There are, in the United States, 28 million single women over age 30, compared with only 17 million single men. How do 11 million excess women affect the social order?

Simply put, men can be as pathetic as they want and still find eager female takers, at every stage of life. Part of being "pathetic" is toying with homosexuality, metrosexuality, whatever you want to call it. The truth may not be that men are more passionately interested in other men than they used to be but that men are less passionately interested in women than they used to be—a matter of supply and demand.

Marian Kester Coombs writes from Crofton, Maryland.

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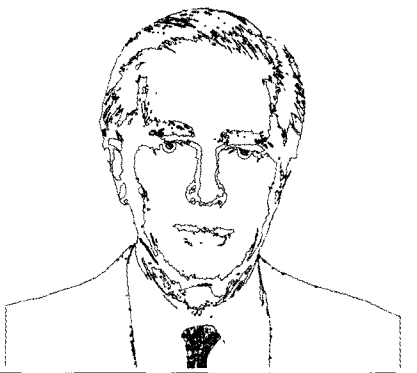
by George McCartney

Character Is Fate



House of Sand and Fog

Produced and distributed by DreamWorks
Directed by Vadim Perelman
Screenplay by Vadim Perelman and Shawn Lawrence Otto from the novel by Andre Dubus III

As Heraclitus concluded so has Andre Dubus III: Character is fate. By way of illustration, in 1999, Dubus gave us his hypnotic novel *House of Sand and Fog*, the story of three very different characters weaving together their individual fates to disastrous effect. Reading this narrative is like being transfixed by a hissing cobra. You know the deadly strike is coming, but you dare not avert your eyes, even for an instant.

I am in debt to first-time feature director Vadim Perelman for translating this novel to the screen. Had he not, I might never have read it. Its cover bears a seal identifying it as an Oprah's Book Club selection, a testimonial that usually works on me as a *cordon sanitaire*. My one regret is that I read the novel just before seeing the film. Doing so threw Perelman's exceptional movie into partial eclipse, for, as good as it is, it cannot compete with the spell cast by the text. Perelman has not found a fully satisfactory cinematic equivalent to Dubus' use of alternating points of view. The book brings us inside its characters' minds by having two of the principals relate in their own voices what they are experiencing as they push each other ever closer to the edge of a moral precipice. Their opposing perspectives intensify the narrative's conflict immeasurably.

Both novel and film aspire to the condition of classic tragedy, but with this difference: Dubus gathered his materials not from the precincts of the highest and mightiest but from the experiences of fairly ordinary people caught up in the muddle of American life today. Two pieces of information clicked together for him. One was a news report about a 70-year-old woman who lost her house to county officials for allegedly not paying her taxes. The other came from an acquaintance, a former officer in the Iranian military who had fled to America after the 1979 revolution and had to settle for a financially straightened existence. His imagination thus sparked, Dubus transformed the 70-year-old into the 36-year-old Kathy Lazaro (Jennifer Connelly), a recovering alcohol and cocaine addict whose reckless inattention to her responsibilities results in the loss of the beachside bungalow her father left her. When her husband leaves her, she becomes so despondent that she ignores county notices regarding overdue taxes that she has been assessed in error. One morning, the sheriff shows up and evicts her. In short order, her home is sold at auction to an Iranian émigré down on his luck in his adoptive country. Middle-aged Col. Massoud Amir Behrani (Ben Kingsley), late of the shah's air force, has been living well beyond his means in San Francisco on the dwindling funds he managed to take with him when he hastily fled his country. Unable to find work in the aerospace industry, he is reduced to holding two minimum-wage jobs. By day, he serves in the state highway's litter patrol; by night, he is a convenience-store clerk. Knowing nothing of Kathy or her woes, he buys her house as an investment property, hoping to recoup his family's fortunes. At first, his purchase seems like the American dream. Expecting to double his money, he is amazed to discover that the bungalow can command nearly four times the $45,000 that he paid for it. There is just one problem: Kathy. She hires a lawyer to inform the colonel that the house was auctioned in error and should be returned to her, its rightful owner. The colonel is incensed at first, concluding that he has been made a victim of bureaucratic incompetence, prejudicial injustice, or both. Then he hits upon a simple solution. Through Kathy's lawyer, he notifies the county that he is willing to surrender the house for its market value—$170,000. When the county balks at his proposal, he puts out a for-sale sign, and prospective buyers begin flocking to him.

As in Sophocles' *Antigone*, the conflict is not between right and wrong. Far more incendiary, it is between right and *right*. Kathy's claim on her property is indisputable. But the colonel also has justice on his side. In purchasing the bungalow, he has put his money at risk and absorbed the costs of moving his wife and son into the new residence in order to escape the punishing $3,000-per-month rent he had been paying at the upscale, largely Iranian-occupied apartment house in which his wife had insisted they live. Furthermore, he has started renovations. Not surprisingly, he feels entitled to a fair profit. A rational solution is at hand, if only he and Kathy could step back and take the time necessary to assess their respective positions. Neither has much time to spare, however. Without savings, Kathy has nowhere to stay but motels, which she cannot afford. For his part, the colonel has quit his jobs and staked what remains of his resources on realizing a profit from selling the house so that he can buy a business. Having suffered brutal dispossession himself, courtesy of Ayatollah Khomeni, he cannot afford to sympathize with Kathy's predicament. When she shows up on his doorstep imploring him to do the right thing, he assures her that it is none of his business and that she should instead take the matter up with the county tax-assessor's office. He assumes that, one way or another, she will gain satisfaction and, more than likely, profit substantially by suing the government. His position seems reasonable, if a touch cold. Given Kathy's willfulness, however, it turns out to be a grave miscalculation. Although her legal-aid lawyer instructs her to stay away from the house and to let official proceedings go forward, Kathy is incapable of such patience. She returns repeatedly—first peacefully, then disruptively. Loudly and publicly, she accuses the colonel of stealing her home, short-circuiting his chances of making a quick sale. To up the ante, Kathy has enlisted the extralegal assistance of Deputy Sheriff Lester Burdon (Ron Eldard), who could

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not help noticing her body as he oversaw her eviction. Quicker than you can utter "film *noir*," Kathy pulls this lummox between her motel bedsheets, pretending to herself that she's merely surrendering to passion rather than working her wiles. Connelly handles this aspect of Kathy's benighted character skillfully, her eyes darting away from Burdon even as she seduces him. Of course, this lack of self-awareness typifies her general lack of moral scrutiny. She has never been one to look very far ahead, and this renders her incapable of facing the specter of consequences squarely. To add further to her almost deliberate blindness, she starts drinking again. Sharing a bottle of wine with Burdon, Connelly exchanges cheers, looking not at her suitor but at her raised glass. We are not surprised when she fails to notice that, for a would-be savior, Burdon is about the worst choice she could make. He is as foolhardy as she is. After a couple of mattress wallows with Kathy, he dumps his wife and two kids to take up full-time duty as her white knight. He then goes after the colonel, assuming that he is nothing but a greedy "wog." To his discomfit, he discovers instead a man of character and determination who is quite ready to stand up to intimidation, especially on behalf of his wife and children. From this point, the plot fairly hurtles toward its preordained conclusion. I say *preordained* because this narrative is founded not on suspense but on character—or, in the cases of Kathy and Burdon, lack thereof.

From youth, Kathy has been a spoiled, wanton hedonist who despised her parents for their baffled attempts to rescue her. Now an adult, she has become so disgusted with her lack of self-control that she courts self-destruction whenever things go wrong. Burdon, who has never recovered from the trauma of witnessing his father leave his mother when he was 12, is a self-deluded hero manque. He entered law enforcement to save people, most especially women in distress. He is too dim to realize how his personal obsession distorts his on-the-job thinking. More astonishingly, he fails to see that he is repeating his father's dereliction, preferring instead to rationalize his abandonment of his wife. One day into their squalid affair, he confides to Kathy that, although he still respects his wife, their relationship has lost its passion, the all-American excuse for abandoning one's spouse.

Kathy and Burdon are prototypical examples of shallow, self-absorbed Americans, the kind that shock the colonel's moral sense. A man of exquisite orderliness, the colonel cannot fathom how so many Americans have been permitted to become such irresponsible slouches. While still in Iran, his position brought him into contact with American military men and Boeing executives whom he respected. He assumed America was populated with people equally disciplined and dedicated. Instead, he finds a population of overfed, undisciplined slobs and concludes, all too tellingly, "These people do not deserve what they have. It is no longer to me a surprise that it is the recent immigrants who excel in this land, the Orientals, the Greeks, and yes, the Persians. We know rich opportunity when we see it." As he tells his son, Americans "have the eyes of small children, always looking for the next distraction."

The colonel's judgment of such Americans as Kathy and Burdon reveals, however, a certain moral blindness in himself. In Iran, he had come into contact with members of SAVAK, the shah's notoriously vicious secret police. He knew of their methods, but he assuaged his conscience, telling himself that, after all, he never directly aided their operations. Still, he knows that he and his class lived luxuriously at the expense of Iran's common people, who were cowed into submission by the ever-present threat of torture and summary execution. And now, in America, he finds himself once again prospering at the expense of another's misery. While he wishes it were otherwise, he convinces himself that he cannot turn away from his opportunity, that to do so would harm his family unconscionably. As in Iran, he smooths over the injustice with the salve of personal necessity.

The film's performances are, from top to bottom, superlative. In his every gesture, Ben Kingsley makes us understand why the colonel has become so hardened and remorseless. This is a proud man who refuses to be broken by misfortune. He is determined to show the world a resolute, untroubled face. Even though his work is menial, he leaves his house daily at dawn, his back straight in a freshly pressed suit, his carriage lithe and commanding. He cannot risk having the wealthy Iranian community learn of his falling fortunes for fear that his daughter might not be able to make a good match. Only with his wife and children does he allow his tenderness to come through. Kingsley's wonderfully expressive eyes convey the character's profound love and concern for them. Whatever his shortcomings, you cannot help admiring this fellow. He may be in a strange land, but his poise, posture, and measured movements all speak of a brave man who knows precisely the geography of his commitments. Jennifer Connelly fully registers Kathy Lazaro's lost soul. Despite her last name, she has not been able to return from the American death of wanton indulgence. You can see it in her gaze, which is forever wavering with confusion and self-doubt. She is submissive one moment, shrill the next, and balanced never. As Burdon, Eldard completes the bitter triangle with a convincing portrayal of an American boyman incapable of true moral discernment and wholly unready to deal with someone thus equipped.

And so it is that, in multicultural, class-divided America, the 2,500-year-old words of Heraclitus still provide the common denominator: Character is indeed fate. C

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

In Praise of Firearms

Apparently from the conviction that one lie is as good (or as bad) as another, the left has never been known to let a lying cause die, if it could help it. I have read that Michael A. Bellesiles' *Arming America: The Story of a National Gun Culture* (published by Knopf and awarded the 2001 Bancroft Prize in History before the book was discovered to include citations of nonexistent sources and other sins against the scholarly tradition) is being released in a revised edition by something called Soft Skull Press in New York City. I have always thought intellectual dishonesty to be dishonesty of the worst and most unforgivable sort, far more serious an offense than insider trading, say, or bank robbery, for the reason that what is sinned against in this instance is truth, and truth is infinitely more important than money. To be careless of the truth is to despise Truth.

It is unpleasant to think of someone despising Truth. It is nearly impossible, however, to conceive of anyone despising guns, as Professor Bellesiles (if, after his dismissal from Emory University, he is still professing anything) obviously must despise them. It is possible, of course, that he is not a fool or a barbarian but merely a hypocrite, in which case I would not think nearly so badly of him. As an old friend of the family (married to a Rothschild, she had fled Paris just before the fall) often remarked when I was growing up: *Stupidity is worse than evil; it cannot be fought.* It may be that "Professor" Bellesiles keeps a hunting rifle or two, a shotgun, several pistols and revolvers, and a thousand or so rounds of ammunition (what the federal government would call an "arsenal") in the cellar of his house, and that he creeps downstairs in the dead of night to heft, fondle, and caress his treasures. In rating hypocrisy below other forms of dishonesty, I do not mean to suggest that it is *not* dishonesty. That would be to attempt to resort to paradox at the Chestertonian level; besides which, Chesterton has been known to lay on paradox a little thick. One might say, really, that all of Chesterton's work, from beginning to end, is paradox: It is almost his single literary trope, his sole authorial voice. On the other hand, we ("we" including Chesterton and his generation) live in morally and intellectually inverted times; and what better device could there be than paradox for the purpose of inverting reversion and turning things outside-out and upside-up again?

Hypocrisy, anyhow, is all too natural a vice. That "Professor" Bellesiles should wish to reinvent history for the purpose of annulling the Constitution, replacing the U.S. government with something in the Soviet style, and transforming a more or less free society into an unfree one in which only a card-carrying vanguard is permitted to bear arms—*that*, I can comprehend. That *any* man should be resistant to the appeal of firearms, however, *is* incomprehensible. Really, it is unnatural: a monstrous perversity on a level with being resistant to the charms and appeals of the fair sex.

My own arsenal is embarrassingly minimal by comparison with those of many shooters I know. A federal inventory would itemize: 1) five rifles (in the .22 magnum, .22-250, .270, .308, and .338 Winchester Magnum calibers), four bolt- and one lever-action; 2) one muzzle-loading musket (.50 caliber); 3) one gas-operated shotgun (12-gauge); 4) three revolvers (.41 magnum, .38, and .22 calibers); 5) one semi-automatic pistol (.40 caliber). Of these, the .22-250 is the latest acquisition: a Ruger M77 bolt-action, equipped with a 2x9 Leupold scope and a sling of the military type. I thought long and hard about buying it in preference to a lever-action Marlin .30-30 and made my decision at last from a simple consideration: Which rifle would I get more use from? My Browning .270 (manufactured in Belgium before the Jap production line was established) and the Ruger M77 .338 Magnum give me firepower aplenty; the .22-250, illegal in Wyoming for taking big game, is a varmint and target rifle, shooting a .22-caliber bullet extremely fast and flat and allowing for intriguing experiments with hand-loads. It is a rifle to carry with you in the pickup, camping, and when engaged in armed hiking: everywhere and in all seasons, for every type of varmint and for plunking. As Ed Detrixhe remarked after some thought when I told him of my purchase:

"You've been working all these years with your big, three-quarter-ton, four-wheel drive trucks. Now you have yourself a Ferrari to play with."

I am one of those technologically challenged people who abhors machinery and can stare for an hour at the simplest gadget without being able to discern its operating principle. Guns—rifles especially—are different, probably on account of their powerful aesthetic component: that blued or stainless steel well bedded in walnut, cold to the touch, smelling of lubricant and oil, and evocative of adventure and a whiff of danger, wilderness and weather, leather boots, blaze orange, horses, fresh snow, campfires, whiskey, hot blood—and an efficient sidearm holstered comfortably on the hip or beneath the armpit. Guns are romantic, but they are also basically tools—which makes them more romantic still, in the special way of manmade things (like the great ocean liners of the first half of the 20th century) that combine utility with a beauty that transcends functionality. Guns, of course, are lethal tools, and their enemies commonly focus on their lethality to condemn not just the tool itself but the user of it, who (they assume) is obsessed with death and—even more—the power of being able to deal death at a second's notice. There is, of course, the sense of security a gun (a handgun, especially) affords, leading to endless debates among gun owners regarding what most reliably delivers a killing punch. (Most shooters I know of, including the formidable Lt. Col. Jeff Cooper, insist on the .45 caliber.) Still, I can assure antigunners that the fascination that gun *aficionados* feel for firearms is neither morbid nor sadistic but aesthetic, in a deeply complicated way. One dimension of this aesthetic is historical, related to what John Lukacs calls historical consciousness: a

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Western phenomenon related to the creation of the modern world. There are very few things today that encompass past and present so neatly and so pleasingly as the gun, which, despite nearly inconceivable advances in design over the centuries, remains recognizably the same device it was hundreds of years ago. It is impossible for the elk hunter, high in his Rocky Mountain camp, to shoulder his rifle without comparing himself, however inchoately, to Jim Bridger, or the shooter in the mesquite deserts of Arizona to thumb the cylinder of his Colt .45 without having at the back of his mind the OK Corral. Nor is there anything silly or juvenile in his doing so, even if Sarah Brady (for whom history began on March 30, 1981) would sneer.

If only because the failure of a firearm bears a vastly greater potential for catastrophe than the failure of a washing machine or a CD player does, guns are one of the very few exceptions today to the law of planned obsolescence and the shoddiness guaranteed by mass production. With the exception of Saturday-night specials in this country and some equivalent items manufactured overseas, modern guns are superbly designed and engineered and wonderfully well made. It is hard, in fact, to think of a product for which the purchaser receives as much for his money. A possible exception is digital electronic equipment; this is mostly outmoded within a year or two, however, and, even if it is not, its expectable life span is not above five or six years. (The prospect of very many computers, DVD's, *etc.* being passed on to grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren, as millions of guns have been over the centuries, appears dim.) Also, all this electronic stuff is associated, mainly, with nerds and geeks; nobody, to my knowledge, has ever accused gun owners of being nerds and geeks (on the assumption, perhaps, that geeks and nerds, unlike "fanatics," scare no one). Finally, guns appreciate very nicely in value—although, for a gun "fanatic," that is on the order of suggesting that one's children appreciate in value: an insulting remark, and in the worst possible taste.

Had I more money, I would own more guns as well—and, having more guns, probably handle the ones I have now less skillfully and efficiently. Every firearm, including those of the same model and sharing the same manufacturer, is different and, hence, shoots differently; each one has, as it were, its unique digital whorl. Carry a gun regularly enough, and long enough, and it becomes like a part of your own body, as familiar and comfortable *and as dependable* as your arm. My old Browning, for instance, handled awkwardly for several years—that is to say, I handled it awkwardly—owing to its weight (about seven pounds) and the trapezoidal forestock around which I could never seem to take a proper hold. But through perseverance, after filling (or attempting to fill) all my big-game permits for several seasons with that one rifle, I became much more adept, so that eight years later, when I decided to move up to the .338 Winchester Magnum for elk, the Browning had long since become what is remains today: simply, an extension of my own body. Only the government is stupid enough to assume that the citizen with the largest "arsenal" is the most dangerous to its interests and agents. More likely, the opposite is true: The shooter with only a few weapons in his possession, in whose use he is impeccably drilled, is far more deadly than the collector, with dozens or scores of firearms scattered around the house or stored behind steel and glass (as our earlier imperial masters, the British, discovered in the course of the Revolutionary War).

A gun owner for nearly all of my adult life, I am hard put still to explain the fascination all guns have for me and the intense affection I feel for my own. The "cold, dead hands" motto may be less a statement of political determination ("The Second Amendment Ain't About Duck Hunting") than it is a simple, honest, and heartfelt expression of a sentiment that is second nature to people familiar with guns. In the case of worldly possessions generally, I find it a relatively easy thing to practice what the catechism calls "detachment." With guns, the thing is not so easy: The attachment is visceral. The usual Freudian explanation, of course, is ludicrous and outlandish: Whatever guns are about, they are totally unrelated to the sex instinct. For those who demand Freudianism, I suggest that the gun, like the automobile, symbolizes freedom, autonomy, and identity—with the difference that the motorist too easily becomes the extension of his auto, while the gun remains always the extension of the shooter.

Firearms are aesthetic objects, among the loveliest creations of man. Combining traditional workmanship with modern technology, they are utile *objets d'art* that can be realized only through the prowess of the user, complementing the craftsman's artistry and fulfilling the designer's skill. Guns are beautiful for their form, simplicity, refinement, precision, efficiency, power—and danger. Danger, not violence. It is true that a lead projectile weighing 250 grains and flying at 3,000 feet per second produces a violent effect on the atmosphere, if on nothing else, and that, in this sense, at least, guns may be said to be "violent." Practically speaking, however, violence is less a property of firearms than it is of the shooter who directs that violence. Yet the word *violence*, outside of any context, is a value-neutral word. Recently, the *New York Times* ran a front-page human-interest story about two U.S. Army snipers in Baghdad whose job is to protect infantry patrols and to kill guerilla leaders before they can carry out attacks. In one countersniper mission, Sgt. Randy Davis spotted an armed Iraqi on a rooftop 300 yards away, trying to line up a shot on a squad from Davis's company in the street below. "I went ahead and engaged him and shot him one time in the chest," he told the *Times*. "I watched him kick back, his rifle flew back, and I saw a little blood come out of his chest. It was a good hit." (Teddy Roosevelt would have appreciated that story.)

Over Christmas break, I took the new Ruger .22-250, a box of factory-loaded ammunition, hearing protectors, and a sight-in target out to the range to fine-tune the job the bore-sight had begun at my workbench. The Laramie Plain stretching between the mountains east and west was covered by a ragged December sky, and the day was windy for shooting 45-grain bullets at distance; trying to wait out Wyoming weather, however, is like attempting to wait out death. The rifle range extends only to 100 yards, but I knew from checking the ballistics tables that point-blank range at 200 yards meant hitting .80 inches above dead center at 100 yards. I set up the target, walked back to the bench, took the bright new rifle from its stiff new case, folded the case double, and laid my gloves across it to make a rest. The pointed brass-and-copper shells stiffened my fingers, and the blued steel clouded from my breath as I stacked the magazine. I got behind the rifle, fitted the stock to my shoulder, and took the safety off. The light rifle had a sweet trigger squeeze, and, when the discharge came, the report was startling; but I felt hardly any recoil at all.

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by Matthew Rarey

Heavy in Their Loafers

Consider the word *gay*. Blunt, yet with a bright ring, this synonym for robust mirth graced our common tongue through the centuries, from Chaucerian verse to the ballads of Cole Porter. The music died in the late 1960's, however, when newly "liberated" homosexuals adopted the word to describe their supposedly happy lifestyles. Through repetition and the negative connotations the word has assumed among those who are "straight" (as opposed to crooked?), *gay* has become their pet word.

In January 2003, during my tenure as letters editor for the *Washington Times*, a fellow from the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance, Rick Rosendall, submitted a letter criticizing another writer for linking male homosexuality to pedophilia. In the service of clarity, the copy desk changed his references to *gay* to what that word actually signifies, *homosexual* (*e.g.*, "gay and lesbian youth" became "homosexual youth"). Otherwise, Mr. Rosendall's excoriation of "homophobes" and the "hateful political agenda" of the "intolerant religious right" ran almost verbatim and got top billing on the letter roster. Just another day of giving our gentle readers their say, I thought as I punched out, if I thought anything at all.

The next day, when I noticed that I had received an e-mail from Mr. Rosendall, I thought it would be a thank-you for running his letter. Not quite. "This [substitution of words] is such a relic, I cannot believe you would insist on doing this," he declared. "Why can't you let people speak in their own voices, short of obscenity?" Taken aback and never one to dither in delicacy, I fired back: "Per the Times' policy against Orwellian abuse of the English language, the euphemism 'gay' is not used to describe the homosexual lifestyle." Calling a spade a spade stuffed a beehive under Mr. Rosendall's bonnet, but what the heck: You have to make a stand for the right when you get the chance. Besides, another day confined to the drab, windowless editorial room could use a little excitement, and I was interested to see where this ball would bounce.

Next, the ball bounced to my superiors. Mr. Rosendall informed them of "my" "outrageous violation of journalistic standards" that had "significantly colored the viewpoint" he had expressed. (Evidently, the root word of "homophobe," the epithet Mr. Rosendall bandied about, did not occur to him.) "Even the Gray Lady, the *New York Times*, got over its stuffiness about the term a decade ago," he wrote. Presumably, the *Washington Times* also would have to print "gay marriage" announcements, should it want to be as hip as the hoary broad. (Thankfully, it has not.)

By that time, Mr. Rosendall had put out an APB on me to his fellow travelers, which elicited a bevy of responses.

Samuel S. Croft of Washington informed me,

> I, sir, am not a euphemism, I am a GAY Man. Call me anything else to my face and I would be hard pressed not to belt you in the jaw. You are the type of person that shakes your hand, looks you in the eye and slips a knife between your ribs. You, sir, are a criminal.

An employee at the Lambda Rising bookstore in Dupont Circle wrote (presumably with a straight face) that I left him with a bad taste in his mouth.

On a lighter note, an officer friendly from the D.C. police, Sgt. Brett Parson, informed me that the DCPD has had a "Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit" since June 2000. Well, fancy that: a notoriously corrupt police force that bungles the majority of murder cases ("*Chandra*? Chandra who?") being cutting-edge where it counts.

Next, *Metro Weekly Magazine* ran coverage featuring a mug shot of Mr. Rosendall (*metroweekly.com/gauge/?ak=305*) that illustrates beyond the power of words how far *gay* has drifted from its linguistic moorings. "It makes the *Times* look petty and silly and desperate," Mr. Rosendall said, referring to a matter that no one else had independently remarked upon until Mr. Rosendall's media blitz. He also admitted that, while he considers *gay* to be a synonym for *homosexual*, "homosexual just sounds clinical." (In other words, *gay* is a euphemism, that is, a word employed to disguise an unbeautiful reality.) This was no hit piece, however, and the article quoted Francis Coombs, the *Times*' managing editor, defending the *Times*' dedication to "preservation of the language" from faddish changes.

By now, everyone was weighing in: a characteristically paradoxical Andrew Sullivan charging me with failure to maintain "linguistic honesty and simplicity"; *Independent Gay Forum* columnist Stephen H. Miller calling me "a thoroughly, even laughably, reactionary letters editor"; and even Howard Kurtz, the *Washington Post* media columnist, noting the affair. Although Mr. Kurtz recounted the bare facts, merely featuring this story in his high-profile column must have dropped the cherry on the generous dollop of whipped cream already on Mr. Rosendall's sundae.

It is Mr. Miller's comment, however, that deserves the final say. As laughable as it may be, only a corpse (or dead soul) fails to react to potentially harmful stimuli. Defending language against perversion was the stimulus here—the necessary response after the issue had been forced, even on so minor an incident. As Orwell shows us, the perversion of language is a form of intellectual dishonesty that sows confusion and may even accommodate outright evil. But thanks to "straights" acquiescing to word perversion—to demand honesty would not be "nice"—*gay* is a damaged word that, if used at all, should not be employed as a meaningless euphemism. For pricking the veneer of "gay pride" tends to expose some truly *un*happy campers. c

Chronicles' editorial assistant Matthew Rarey is sitting in for Humpty Dumpty, who is enjoying a well-deserved vacation.

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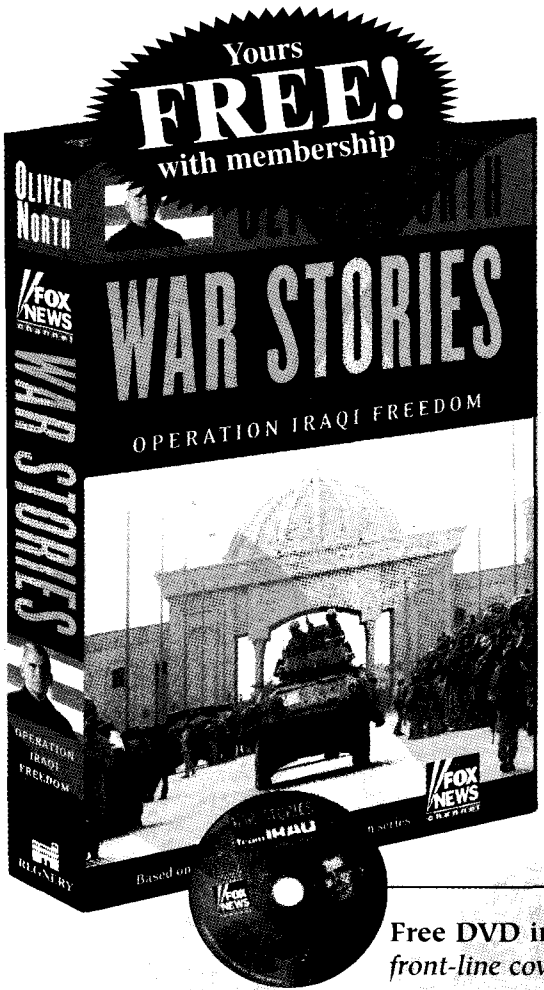
On the ground in Iraq with Oliver North



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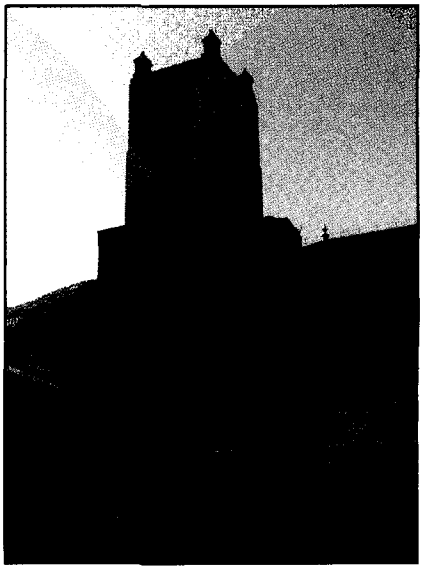

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